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ABSTRACT

Substantial evidence is accumulating which emphasizes the significant role of the family for drug abusing adolescents. To investigate the influence of the family on adolescents (N=17) involved in heavy marihuana use, interviews with family members, case studies of each adolescent, and psychological evaluations were conducted to determine the seriousness of the adolescent's drug use. Even for those adolescents who were no longer heavy drug users, the drug use experience led to lower aspirations. Many adolescents, once excellent students, used drugs as a means of withdrawing from the demands and pressures of school and the expectations of their families. Family dynamics clearly contributed to marihuana use. Conflict with non-drug-using siblings preceded drug use and was often a contributing factor. In all its functions, marihuana served to detach adolescents from the problems of the real world. The findings suggest that family psychodynamics contribute to adolescent marihuana abuse and work to shape the specific meaning such abuse has for each adolescent. (JAC)

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Adolescent Marijuana Abusers and Their Families

Herbert Hendin, M.D.
Ann Pollinger, Ph.D.
Richard Ulman, Ph.D.
Arthur C. Carr, Ph.D.

NIDA Research Monograph 40

September 1981

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We also owe a great debt of gratitude to all the youngsters and their families for their willingness to share their lives with us.

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Foreword

Substantial evidence is accumulating which emphasizes the significant role the family plays in the initiation, maintenance, cessation, and prevention of drug abuse by its members. This monograph depicts and investigates that role by studying the families of a small number of adolescents involved in heavy marijuana use.

The study provides a robust "real life" description of the interplay between family dynamics and heavy adolescent marijuana use. As the authors state, their specific aims are, "first, to explore through psychodynamic techniques what in the adolescent's adaptation and interaction with his or her family contributed to the marijuana abuse; and second, to identify the functions which marijuana plays in the adolescent's overall psychosocial adaptation."

Dr. Hendin and his colleagues offer a number of insightful perspectives and approaches to their subject. First, they utilize the psychodynamic approach, both in the design of the study and interpretation of its results, that has not often been taken in the drug field. Second, they present extensive information about nondrug-abusing siblings of the target adolescents, comprising an informal control or comparison group about whom little has been known. Third, they delineate the adolescent's family interactions and relationships in terms of such themes as self-destructiveness, anger, and grandiosity, an approach superbly utilized in such family studies as Jules Henry's Pathways to Madness, but seldom seen in the drug abuse literature. Fourth, few previous studies of marijuana-using adolescents have focused exclusively on the heavy user, and none so intensively. Finally, the authors make use of the representative case design methodology, a research approach which has often been praised but infrequently applied.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse believes that these unique elements, in addition to the information provided through more traditional means, make this study a valuable addition in the continuing effort to understand, prevent, and treat adolescent drug abuse.

Marvin Snyder, Ph.D.
Director
Division of Research
National Institute on Drug Abuse

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I. Introduction

Chapter 1

Background

It has been almost two decades since marijuana made its way from the ghettos and bohemian enclaves of large American cities into the white, middle class, urban,and suburban youth culture. Drug use surveys have documented its rapid spread, with the proportion of adolescents using the drug increasing steadily throughout the 1970's. The well-established picture of the adolescent drug abuser as the product of a broken home and a deprived environment (Chein et al. 1964, Chambers et al. 1968) began to be broadened as a result of increasing evidence of marijuana abuse among white youngsters who are not socially disadvantaged and who come from intact working and middle class families (McGlothlin and West 1968; Blum et al. 1972; Blum and Richards 1979). Fueled by the alarm expressed by parents, educators, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists, researchers representing a wide range of disciplinary perspectives have sought to explain adolescent attraction to this illegal substance.

The study described in this monograph builds on past work in this area which has been done by ourselves and others during the past decade. Although it is unique in its focus on white, working and middle class, high-school-aged youngsters who are marijuana abusers rather than simply users, as well as in its particular approach to understanding adolescent marijuana abuse within the psychodynamic context of the family, this research should be viewed in relation to both the strengths and deficits of past work.

Much of recent research on adolescent marijuana use grew out of an attempt to distinguish youngsters who used the drug from those who did not. In their early work the Jessors (1973, 1976, 1977) identified role modeling with marijuana smoking friends and peer pressure as the two most significant factors accounting for a youngster's use of marijuana. Somewhat later, Jessor and his colleagues (1980) reported that such conformity with peers extended beyond marijuana smoking to include a variety of "problem behaviors" such as early sexual experience, excessive alcohol consumption, forms of delinquent behavior, and use of other illegal drugs. Kandel (1973, 1978) likewise reported peer modeling and peer pressure as the critical variables in explaining use of marijuana by adolescents, although suggesting that certain psychological states, notably high levels of personal dissatisfaction, depression, and strong feelings of alienation from parents, may play a role in the use of "more serious" drugs (Paton et al. 1977).

Another group of researchers stressed psychological rather than peer variables as determinant of adolescent marijuana smoking. These studies have identified such factors as low self-esteem (Kaplan 1975 a,b 1978; Norem-Hebeisen 1975); anxiety, depression, and lack of self-control (Kupfer et al. 1973); difficulties in establishing meaningful relationships with others (Esman 1967; Mirin et al. 1971); and the need to repress feelings of hostility and aggression (Allen and West 1968) as characterizing young marijuana smokers and differentiating them from those who do not use the drug.

Studies correlating marijuana use with peer associations, other forms of deviant behavior, or various psychological states have not explained the nature of the relationship between marijuana smoking and these variables, and have raised for many researchers the question whether marijuana is the cause or the consequence of the identified relationships. McGlothlin and West saw marijuana use as contributing to the development of passive, inward-turning, "amotivational" personality characteristics. "For numerous middle class students," these authors wrote, "the subtly progressive change from conforming achievement-oriented behavior to a state of relaxed and careless drifting has followed their use of significant amounts of marijuana." (McGlothlin and West 1968, p. 128). A number of other authors (Kolansky and Moore 1971, 1972; Kornhaber 1971; Kolodny et al. 1974; Maugh 1974) have concurred with this view.

An opposing view has been put forth by such researchers as Grinspoon (1971) and Hochman and Brill (1973) who see marijuana use in much more innocuous terms, and largely as a manifestation of a change in lifestyle. Grinspoon, for example, maintains that marijuana is, like long hair, simply a mark of change in behavior quite distinct from personality. "This type of change," states Grinspoon, "may be likened to that which a girl who decides to join a convent may undergo; she certainly appears different with respect to her values, dress, goals, behavior and so forth, but beneath her habit the same pre-convent personality resides." (Grinspoon 1971, p. 290) Similarly, he believes that underneath the apparent behavioral changes of young marijuana users are personalities which have not undergone any basic alteration.

In a more recent study involving psychodynamic interviews over a period of several months with 15 college students who used marijuana regularly and heavily, one of the authors of this monograph found that marijuana was neither causative of changing attitudes toward ambition and success nor simply an incidental concomitant of a change in lifestyle (Hendin 1973, 1975, 1980). Rather, this research found that marijuana was used regularly and in large amounts by these college students to provide relief from competitive conflicts that were proving intolerable. A common pattern found among these marijuana smokers was the equation of success with destructiveness, and failure with humiliation. Finding it impossible to accept either alternative, they used marijuana in the service of withdrawing from the conflict.

The findings of this research suggested a number of important directions for the study of adolescent marijuana use. First, the interview data which were collected provided clear evidence of the problematic nature of heavy marijuana use in the lives of these college students and pointed to a connection of this behavior with longstanding psychological and social conflicts. The failure of much of the earlier research to distinguish clearly between marijuana users and abusers makes it somewhat difficult to compare this conclusion with those of other studies and especially with those which have reported innocuous results of marijuana use. At the same time, it suggests that among the total population of marijuana users, as has long been recognized with users of alcohol, it is those whose intake is in such amounts or with such frequency as to interfere with their lives who constitute the most appropriate focus for concern and for study. And there is considerable clinical and research evidence of a sizable segment of the marijuana-smoking population whose use indeed involves such interference (Esman 1967; Wieder and Kaplan 1969; Gottesfeld et al. 1972-73; Hendin 1973, 1975, 1980).

Second, the use of psychodynamic interviewing in the study of marijuana-abusing college students was found to be an extremely valuable research technique which allowed the etiology of the marijuana abuse and related psychological characteristics of the abusers to be clearly seen, and provided significant understanding of the role that marijuana played in the students' overall psychosocial adaptation. In respect to this method of data collection, the study differed markedly from most research on marijuana use which has relied essentially on self-report questionnaires. Although psychodynamic studies of adolescent marijuana users have been reported in the literature, those detailed enough to provide comprehensive information have mainly been individual case studies chosen simply on the basis of who came to treatment to a particular therapist (Esman 1967, Wieder and Kaplan 1969, Gottesfeld et al. 1972-1973).

Third, in demonstrating the connection between the students' drug behavior and their desire to escape competitive conflicts, this research suggested that marijuana as a "drug of choice" has particular functions for particular groups or subgroups of users. Although the information derived from the sample of this study--students at a highly prestigious, academically competitive university--cannot be automatically generalized to all marijuana-abusing adolescents, the importance of understanding the adaptive function of marijuana for abusers of all ages in a variety of environments was clearly indicated.

Finally, marijuana abuse in all 15 cases seen in conjunction with this research appeared to be related to psychodynamic conflicts having their roots in the students' family experiences. Parents, in particular, were quite consistently and intimately tied up with these young people's sense of being caught in an impossible position regarding achievement and competition. Although other members of the family were not interviewed, given most of the students' desire to present themselves as independent and separated from their parents, family-related conflicts were readily apparent in the course of the interviews.

The focus of most past research on marijuana users of all degrees, rather than specifically on abusers, and the resulting tendency to view marijuana as something less than a "serious" drug, has led researchers to an overconcentration on peer relationships and to the neglect of the family. In contrast, work done on use of so-called "hard drugs" has seldom made such a mistake. Drawing on the research of Ackerman (1958) and Vogel and Bell (1960), such work has stressed the tendency of troubled families to "scapegoat" one child and to use his or her problems, including problems related to drugs, to help hold the family together. Emphasis has also been placed on explaining hard drug use in terms of the youngster's inability to resolve conflicts concerning separation and individuation. In this light, drug abuse is viewed as the adolescent's attempt to create an illusion of defiance while actually becoming bound closer to the family (Reilly 1975; Huberty 1975; Noone and Reddig 1976; Stanton et al. 1978).

Since subjects in these studies have tended to be only incidental users of marijuana, it has not been clear whether such patterns are evident in the case of adolescents for whom marijuana is their primary drug. Evidence of significant correlations between parental variables and adolescent marijuana use, provided through the recent work of Brook and her associates (1977, 1978, 1980, 1981) does, however, support the findings of the college student study in suggesting the family as a critical variable in explaining use of marijuana by adolescents.

The present project was undertaken in order to close the gaps in past research on adolescent marijuana use, particularly those pertaining to the role of the family. Specifically its aims were first, to explore through psychodynamic techniques what in the adolescent's adaptation and interaction with his or her family contributed to the marijuana abuse; and second, to identify the functions which marijuana plays in the adolescent's overall psychosocial adaptation.

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Chapter 2

Design of the Study

In keeping with the overall goal of studying adolescent marijuana use in the dynamic context of the family, a research design was developed which differed in key respects from those which have been most widely used to investigate marijuana use, especially among young people. Most systematic research on marijuana abuse has been based on what may be termed an "extensive" design; that is, one involving a relatively large number of cases from each of whom a limited amount of information is collected. Participants in this type of study are typically asked quite specific, closed-ended questions, and the answers obtained are then subjected to tabulation and statistical treatment.

In contrast, this study was based on an "intensive" research design, in which a relatively small number of cases were studied in depth over a considerable period of time. In developing this design, we drew heavily upon recent research on single individuals, and in particular on the work of Chassan (1961, 1965, 1967), Shontz (1965), and Spotts and Shontz (1976, 1980). The general approach taken was that of the "representative case method" as has been developed and effectively used by Shontz in a number of separate studies, including an intensive investigation of American cocaine users.

A number of factors suggested the use of such a research design. First, the problem area under investigation, adolescent marijuana use, and the specific focus on family psychodynamics appeared to be best studied through the intensive analysis of cases lying at the extreme end of the continuum of adolescent marijuana use. It was felt that a relatively small number of particularly heavy users, by representing the essence of the behavior in an obvious, easily researchable form, would tell more about the psychodynamics of marijuana use than would a large sample of users of varying amounts of marijuana. The individuals in the study were to provide a view which, as Spotts and Shontz describe it, "enlarges for inspection a component of all people that is normally too obscure or undeveloped to be clearly seen." (Spotts and Shontz 1976, p. 35)

Secondly, because the key variable, heavy marijuana use, could be identified in individuals by readily recognizable behavioral characteristics, the selection of appropriate cases for the research was conceptually clear. Thirdly, the selection and analysis of cases were approached with a preexisting framework for viewing adolescent marijuana use in the context of family dynamics, out of which an explicit, systematic procedure for data collection could be developed. Thus, it was felt the research would minimize the key limitation of many case studies in which the theoretical or practical significance emerges out of the descriptive material collected, rather than serving as a guide for the information collecting process.

The study began with a careful specification of the target group to be investigated. In order to illuminate the relationship between adolescent marijuana use and family dynamics, the study concentrated on adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18, from middle and working class families, who were still living with their parents at the time of the research. In order to eliminate the significantly confounding effects of separation and divorce on the feelings and behavior of the adolescents studied, only intact families in which the two parents were living together at the time of the study were included. In light of the possibly confounding issue of race on the dynamics of marijuana smoking, the decision was made to concentrate in this initial project on white adolescents. As indicated earlier, the study was to focus exclusively on heavy marijuana users, who were defined as daily or almost daily smokers with clearly established patterns of smoking marijuana throughout the day as well as during evening and nighttime hours. Finally, the concentration was on those individuals for whom marijuana constituted their primary, if not their sole, drug.

Having set the sample parameters, we then undertook a systematic analysis of records of over 300 marijuana-abusing adolescents fitting our specifications, which were obtained through Family Court, schools, social agencies, and mental health clinics within a single northeast metropolitan area. In addition, a wide range of professionals having daily contact with adolescents were contacted to seek out heavy marijuana users who had not yet been referred for any type of treatment or identified in any public way as having a drug abuse problem.

The background research showed a picture of the adolescent marijuana abuser which was considerably diverse regarding both demographic and socioeconomic variables, notwithstanding the fact that all met the general sample specifications. In addition, the youngsters differed in many respects pertaining to the context and patterns of their drug abuse. In some cases, for example, marijuana abuse occurred within the context of a general pattern of delinquent behavior, while in others, it was linked to an otherwise law-abiding lifestyle. Some youngsters' use of marijuana was accompanied by significant intake of alcohol or a variety of secondary drugs, while others were purely users of marijuana. Some were extremely open in their use of marijuana, while others took considerable care to conceal their use, or at least had done so up until the point where apprehension occurred. Finally, some clear distinctions emerged in the patterns of marijuana abuse between the young men and the young women on whom background data was collected.

Out of a wide range of marijuana-abusing adolescents, 17 individual cases were selected for intensive analysis. In no sense were these youngsters chosen because they represented the "average" adolescent marijuana user, nor should this group be regarded as a random sample of the identified target group. Rather each person was specifically selected to epitomize a particular way of life seen among the larger group. While all the cases were experts on the subject of marijuana use and had extensive firsthand knowledge of this behavior, they were quite different from one another in many other respects and their selection for the study was based largely on these differences.

Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious backgrounds, for example, were all represented among the group intensively studied, as well as various combinations of religions between the two parents. While the fathers of all the youngsters selected were employed full-time, their occupations ranged from that of delivery truck driver and bartender through owners of small stores or businesses, up to engineer, physician, and corporate executive, with corresponding differences in affluence and life style. Cases were selected to represent both urban and suburban residence, as well as a wide mix of ethnic backgrounds. In keeping with the ratios reflected among the larger group identified, 11 of the cases were males and 6 were females. Finally, the youngsters selected represented both delinquent and nondelinquent groups and included some users of alcohol and/or secondary drugs.

As other researchers using the representative case method have established (Spotts and Shontz 1976), the diversity of these characteristics reflected within the group is regarded as a particular strength of the study in that it provided an opportunity to examine heavy marijuana use in a wide variety of family contexts. In addition, as will be stressed in discussing the research findings, the significance of the patterns observed among the adolescents is certainly enhanced by the fact that they emerged from so heterogeneous a group.

The focus of this research was on the family relationships, patterns of interactions, and psychodynamics which were characteristic of the marijuana-abusing adolescents. Thus, the subjects of the study included the parents as well as the youngster. In addition, background analysis had indicated that in most families in which one youngster was a marijuana abuser, there were close age-order siblings who were not. This suggested a unique opportunity to use a nondrug-abusing sibling with each family as a type of "control group" in illuminating the patterns of family psychodynamics which contribute to marijuana abuse.

Drawing on past work with this method (Hendin 1965, 1975) a series of unstructured psychodynamic interviews was then conducted with the adolescent, the parents, and in every case where it was possible with the next age-order sibling. Unstructured interviewing as a data collection technique was used to tap each family member's inner feelings as well as consciously held attitudes, and, in particular, to illuminate the meaning and significance of the adolescent's heavy marijuana use within the total family context.

During the interview process, subjects talked about feelings, persons, events, and situations, both past and present, of concern to them. No attempt was made to structure the interviews to obtain specific types of information from participants. Rather, the participants' trend of associations, dreams, fantasies, omissions, inconsistencies, and reactions to the interviewer were all used to gain a comprehensive picture of the psychodynamics of each family member as well as the family as a unit. Where necessary and appropriate, this also involved some specific questioning or challenging of defenses by the interviewer; for the most part, however, the participants simply presented themselves in their own style and manner.

In each of the 17 cases, the marijuana-abusing youngster was seen for a minimum of 10 separate interviews, and at least two interviews were conducted with each parent. In 11 of the cases an appropriate nondrug-abusing sibling was also available and agreed to participate and was interviewed at least twice All participants from a single family were most often seen together for the initial session. Subsequent sessions were then conducted on an individual basis, although husbands and wives were often seen together for some of their sessions. An average of 25 interviews per family were conducted over a period of approximately three months. Each family was then followed up at six-month intervals over a two-year period. In each case a single interviewer saw each member of a particular family.

At the outset of the research the families were told that both individual and family psychotherapy would be available on an ongoing basis in exchange for their participation in the study. In about one-third of the families at least one member did continue for some form of short-term therapy, while in an additional one-third of the cases, at least one family member went on for longer term treatment. The essential research goal in each case, however, was to continue to see the youngster and the family until an understanding of the family dynamics and the functions which marijuana played for the adolescent was obtained. In cases where the next age-order sibling could not be directly interviewed, special emphasis was placed on obtaining a clear picture from other family members of the behavioral adaptation of this sibling and the way in which the family psychodynamics

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worked to shape such an adaptation.

Interviews were taped and transcribed, forming a comprehensive record for each of the 17 family cases. These materials have been placed on file at the Center for Psychosocial Studies, where they are available to interested researchers.

As a verification of the material obtained through the clinical data collection procedures, and as an aid in developing specific diagnoses, a battery of psychological tests was also administered by the project psychologist to each of the marijuana-abusing youngsters and to the 11 nondrug-abusing siblings. This battery included the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS), the Rorschach Test, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), a Sentence Completion Test (SCT), the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and a self-report background questionnaire (Carr 1972). The battery was devised to provide a reliable estimate of each youngster's intellectual functioning and key personality characteristics. The specific nature of and rationale for including each test have been described elsewhere (Carr 1980).

After the data were collected for each case, the interview transcripts were reviewed by the person conducting the interviews with the particular family in order to identify the essential psychodynamic patterns. A second psychodynamically trained researcher made an independent review of the clinical material, and where inconsistencies in interpretation occurred, the data were presented to the entire research team for discussion and resolution. The psychological test data were compiled into a formal evaluation report independent of the clinical interviews. Finally, a joint analysis by the interviewers and the psychologist of all information pertaining to the family unit formed the basis for establishing the dominant adaptation and psychodynamic patterns of each case.

In interpreting the data obtained, it should be stressed again that the fundamental aim of this study was to provide comprehensive "real life" descriptions of the interplay between family dynamics and heavy marijuana use among adolescents which have not emerged out of earlier studies of this behavior. The research was specifically not designed to be experimental in nature, and thus strict cause-effect relationships are not established on the basis of the information reported. Rather, the behavioral, psychological, and psychodynamic patterns described in this monograph and, in particular, those emanating from the comparison between the marijuana-abusing adolescents and their siblings, provide a dynamic understanding of what in the family interaction encourages one youngster to become an abuser while the brother or sister does not.

The following section of the monograph presents a synopsis of the lives of the adolescent marijuana abusers who participated in the research. This includes a behavioral overview of the entire group of youngsters, followed by a series of reports on six representative cases. These are designed to provide an indepth view of youngsters who illustrate the key patterns which were observed. The case reports are based on the interviews conducted with the marijuana-abusing adolescent, the parents, and in five of the six cases, with a sibling immediately older or younger than the abuser.

The case reports are followed by two chapters which discuss the clinical findings of the research pertaining first to the issue of family psychodynamics related to adolescent marijuana abuse, and second to the various functions which heavy marijuana use appeared to perform for the adolescents in this study.

The next general section focuses on the results of the psychological test battery which was administered to the adolescent marijuana abusers and, where possible, to their siblings. This section begins with a brief overview of how the abusers as a group performed on these various tests. Next, the psychological test data of five abuser-sibling pairs are presented in detail, compared and contrasted. A brief chapter in this section then discusses the most significant implications of the psychological test findings for understanding marijuana abuse among adolescents. The final chapter of the monograph summarizes the key conclusions emerging from the research.

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II. The Lives of Adolescent Marijuana Abusers

Chapter 3

An Overview of Adolescent Marijuana Abusers

In keeping with the study's focus on the ways in which psychodynamics of the family contribute to adolescent marijuana abuse, an overview is provided in this chapter of the family context in which these adolescents were operating. This begins with a look at the youngsters' troubled relationships with their families, and the generally negative feelings about themselves which developed out of these relationships. The effects of these disturbances on their behavior outside the family are then briefly discussed, focusing in particular on their school adaptation and their relationships with their friends. This general description is based on material which emerged from the unstructured interviews with the marijuana-abusing adolescents, their parents, and in some cases with their nondrug-abusing siblings.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

All of the marijuana-abusing adolescents had quite turbulent lives at home. In most cases their difficulties went well beyond the typical problems most youngsters have during adolescence when faced with new issues and the need to define their relationships with parents on a new basis. These particular youngsters tended most often to be locked into destructive, angry-dependent relationships with their parents. These relationships were characterized by a pattern of provocative and defiant behavior which infuriated and frustrated their parents at the same time that it forced them to be more controlling and limiting than they might otherwise have been.

Each of the youngsters, to one degree or another, refused to follow prescribed rules of conduct at home. Many insisted, for example, on coming home after school with friends whom they knew their parents did not want in their house. Most also consistently objected to helping with chores around the house. When they did agree to do their household jobs, they would often disappear without explanation before completing them.

Many in the group came home just enough later than a previously agreed-upon curfew to infuriate their parents. Although a call home would often have prevented an argument, they usually chose not to make it. Sometimes, after telling their parents that they would call, they would stay out all night without calling. Agreements over how they would use the family car or money given them by their parents were often violated. Taking the family car out for a late night joy ride was a common activity for many of these adolescents.

One young man continued to ride his minibike illegally on the highway despite frequent promises to his parents to curtail this behavior. Others would go away to weekend rock concerts over their parents' strong objections or would refuse, after much parental pleading, to go on family outings or vacations. Two boys whose parents worked in their school systems got into constant academic and disciplinary trouble, creating an infuriating and embarrassing situation for their parents. A number of the young women were quite adept at driving their parents to the point of despair through involvement with boyfriends they knew their parents disliked.

Several of the adolescents carried their provocativeness, defiance, and anger toward their families beyond the confines of the home into the community. This was often manifested in a pattern of stealing and petty larceny. One youngster regularly broke into and stole items from cars parked at his parents' synagogue. Later, he was arrested for breaking into and stealing valuables from the same temple. Another boy retaliated against a cemetery night watchman who refused to allow him to ride his motorcycle around the grounds by stealing his expensive camera. One young man stole medication from his therapist's office, while another youngster stole syringes, vials, and medication from a hospital where he had a summer job. Shoplifting from local stores was also common. Several adolescents had vandalized neighbors' property or burglarized neighborhood homes, stealing antiques, jewelry, and stereo equipment. One boy stole thousands of dollars from a country club safe, while another took a similar amount from his grandparents.

In most instances, there was no attempt on the part of these adolescents to sell or pawn their stolen property. Instead, they tended to leave it in attics or under beds where their parents were likely to discover it eventually or in places outside the home where it could be easily traced back to the youngster. One of the adolescents left a self-incriminating note to a girlfriend in a bag of stolen objects that he had hidden in a neighbor's garage. Another youngster stole a ring from the mother of a friend he was staying with and gave it to his girlfriend which quickly led to exposure of the theft.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons that many youngsters used marijuana was to provoke and defy their parents. Some came staggering home so high that it was virtually impossible for their parents to ignore them. Others went beyond coming home visibly stoned to smoking marijuana and getting high at home.

In a number of cases, such blatant behavior did not go unchallenged by parents and became the focus of constant family fights. One young man used to have afternoon "pot and booze" parties in his parents' basement until his mother quit her job in order to put a stop to such activities. A second young man continued to smoke marijuana in his bedroom even after his father had reported him to the police for this behavior. This type of defiance left many parents feeling that they had completely lost control of their children. The attempt to regain and reassert control, sometimes over the full range of their child's activities, became a constant preoccupation for some of the parents.

In these cases, the parents tended to treat their adolescents like young children whose every move had to be watched and supervised. In return, the youngsters fought such supervision, seldom evidencing any awareness of their real needs for parental support, guidance, and approval. That the problem was less their behavior than its defiant, provocative nature was suggested by the way in which their siblings also sometimes engaged in disapproved activities, but in a way which minimized parental involvement and avoided overreaction.

The relationships of many of the youngsters' with their families were marked by explosive, often violent, expressions of anger. Shouting and yelling among family members were typically reported. These exchanges were sometimes punctuated by the adolescent's breaking valuable household objects, ripping up freshly planted shrubs, or destroying other family property. One young man used a sledge hammer to break his parents' locked bedroom door to get a pair of shoes they had taken in order to keep him at home following a family disagreement.

Physical violence toward parents or siblings was also not uncommon among these adolescents. One youngster was taken by police to a psychiatric facility after hitting his mother in a fit of rage. Another knocked his father to the ground with a blow to the jaw, precipitating a call to the police. Still another regularly pummeled his younger brother when he was upset or angry at his parents.

In some of the cases the adolescents' disruptive behavior within the family or community led to the parents swearing out a petition against their child in Family Court. This usually resulted in the youngster's being placed on probation. In other cases, adolescents apprehended by the police were adjudicated as delinquents; some ended up spending periods of time in various treatment centers or group homes. One young man was sentenced to a six-month term in a county jail.

A few of these youngsters attempted to break out of the facilities in which they were placed. One, for example, twice ran away from his residential treatment center. On the latter attempt he managed to escape to a southern state before being returned by his grandparents following the issuance of a warrant. Another tried to break out of a detention center by smashing a window and later fled town to avoid a second incarceration.

In cases where the youngster dealt with his or her family by concealment rather than provocation, the parents often managed not to notice even blatant problems. Despite regular and heavy marijuana use, and in two instances, large drug-dealing operations, some adolescents managed to keep their parents in the dark about their drug involvement. This pattern of parental myopia in several cases extended to other areas of their child's life. The parents of one young man, for example, who had been diagnosed early as having a hearing impairment and a learning disorder never took any corrective steps, despite their son's poor school performance. Another youngster, who had trouble falling asleep, was up every night beyond midnight without his parents even once asking what was troubling him.

Most of the marijuana abusers regardless of their families' stance toward their marijuana smoking or other behavior considered their parents to be insensitive, indifferent to their basic needs, and generally uncaring. Some were quite verbal about their anger and bitterness toward their parents. On the other hand, the majority used their behavior as a way of expressing their anger without connecting it directly to their feelings. These young people were invariably unable to deal directly with their parents and were bound in the need both to defy them and to punish themselves for their rebellion.

Despite the marijuana abusers' generally poor relationships with their families, not one of them seemed able to create real separation from his/her parents. Yet several frequently ran away from home or stayed away on an indefinite basis. Sometimes this involved hiding at a friend's house for a period of time; in other instances it entailed traveling hundreds of miles to other states. Most of these excursions, however, merely reinforced the angry dependency which led to their occurrence.

Overall, then, caught between their own and their parents' anger and distance, these youngsters in most cases had no adults with whom they could share their problems, and from whom they could learn and receive guidance. Far from being a source of strength and security, their families both contributed to and mirrored the complex problems which characterized their lives.

FEELINGS ABOUT SELF

Related to and reinforced by the difficulties these youngsters had in their relationships with their families, were their generally troubled views of themselves. During the interview sessions, many of the adolescents openly expressed a high degree of self-hatred, most often evidenced through strongly negative and distorted body images. A number of very attractive youngsters were unusually upset about the shape of their bodies, their facial appearance, or their hair. One, for example, was convinced that his hair was so kinky that it made him ugly and repulsive. One rather average-looking girl had difficulty leaving her home for fear someone would be repelled by her appearance, and two quite handsome young men told of becoming very depressed whenever they saw themselves in a mirror.

Many in the group had had physical, emotional, or intellectual problems in early childhood around which they organized and integrated their contemptuous self-images. In this regard, they appeared to mirror the views of themselves which they perceived their parents had, and to hold steadfastly onto such views even though the circumstances which may once have supported them no longer existed. As a child, one boy had to have his enlarged breasts surgically corrected. Later, as an only slightly overweight adolescent, he constantly referred to himslf as a "fat faggot" and a freak who would be better off living among bohemians and hippies. Several other youngsters who had long since recovered from childhood lisps or illnesses continued to be extremely self-conscious and to talk about themselves as deformed and damaged. Still others, who as children had had difficulties in learning, constantly spoke of themselves as "stupid idiots" and "morons" who would never succeed in school. Many of the youngsters recounted instances from their childhood where they remembered their parents being critical of their appearance or behavior, and these appeared to have been influential in the development of the youngsters' negative self-images.

At times, their negative feelings about themselves were directly and physically expressed, as in the case of one young man who made deep cuts on his arms with a razor after his girlfriend threatened to break up with him. Another youngster who felt her mother had embarrassed and humiliated her in front of her friends responded by cutting her own face with a razor blade.

Some of the adolescents expressed their dissatisfaction with themselves through a preoccupation with death, dying, and suicide. One girl explained that she was terrified that she would awake in the morning to find a dead person in her room. She also described how she would write the words from popular songs, all having to do with grief, sadness, and loneliness, on her bedroom walls. A second adolescent was constantly thinking of suicide and of blowing off his head with a shotgun.

Even those in the group who were not overtly suicidal in their thoughts or behavior reflected a highly fatalistic attitude toward the world and a sense that no effort of theirs could or would change the unhappy circumstances of their lives. They tended to see their families as the cause of the difficulties they were having; any improvement in their situation was seen as deriving from a change in attitude on the part of their parents or siblings.

SCHOOL ADAPTATION

Both the disturbing family situations of these marijuana-abusing youngsters and the negative feelings about themselves that emerged from these disturbances were reflected in the remarkably similar patterns of behavior problems which they exhibited in school. As a group, they appeared to be extremely tense, restless, and loud in class. When they were not being disruptive, they were often inattentive, lost in daydreams or mindless staring, and frequently "nodding off." They all cut classes regularly with little, if any, regard for the consequences of their actions.

Many had a defiant and rebellious attitude toward their teachers, usually coming to school dressed in their most torn and dirty clothes. Some regularly came to class without paper, pencils, or books; refused on a regular basis to hand in homework assignments; and managed to miss scheduled tests. Others would get up in the middle of class, leave without an excuse, and then fail to return.

The behavior problems of some of the adolescents went beyond being inattentive, disruptive, or defiant, and involved verbal or even physical abuse of their teachers. Some of them recounted cursing at teachers, threatening to hit them, and at times pushing or shoving them. Fights with other students were also frequently described, and several had physical confrontations with principals or other school administrators. Several were either suspected of or caught stealing school equipment or money from teachers' unattended purses. Others participated in after-hour acts of vandalism such as setting off firecrackers in school buildings or destroying school property. In one instance, an adolescent girl and her male friend broke into their principal's office and "trashed" it in an angry display of their dislike for him. Another of the girls was part of a group that held up other students and then used the money they had stolen to buy drugs.

About a third of the youngsters had long histories of learning difficulties. In some instances these had been diagnosed early and the youngsters had received special educational instruction. In other cases, the problems were not diagnosed or responded to, and the child was left alone to handle, however inadequately, the process of learning. These learning problems usually included particular difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling.

The other two-thirds of the group had good to excellent early academic records. When they entered high school, however, these youngsters commonly began to manifest such problems as difficulty in completing assignments, paying attention, or remembering and using what they read or heard in class. Several began to find it extremely difficult to read aloud or speak in class and generally stopped participating actively in the learning process.

In addition, a number of these adolescents had consistent patterns of truancy, suspension, and, in a few cases, expulsion. Over the three year course of the study, only two of the group remained in the same high school in which they were originally enrolled. These moves, resulting from either academic or disciplinary troubles, and sometimes both, did not appear to bring about significant change in their school adaptation, except in those several cases where the transfer was made into an "alternative" educational program characterized by less pressured, more individualized, or "real-world," orientations. For those who remained in traditional educational environments, early school problems were usually repeated wherever they went.

The youngsters' schooltime use of marijuana should be viewed within the context of their pervasive behavioral and academic problems. Most of the group met their friends early in the morning in order to get high before starting the day. Smoking continued throughout the day, intensified during lunch hour, and often resulted in the youngster's not going back in the afternoon. Those who cut afternoon classes would often meet friends near the school grounds to continue their smoking during the late afternoon hours.

For those who had at one time done well in school, the onset of heavy marijuana use tended to coincide with a withdrawal from scholastic and athletic competition. One young man with an excellent school record and test scores that placed him in the 98th percentile among high school students in the nation, began in the 9th grade to find competition intolerable, gave up all attempts at academic success, and became a "pothead." Another youngster had been a relatively good student and an outstanding athlete in several sports. Beginning in the 10th grade, however, he found succeeding in school and in sports less pleasurable. He stopped trying in class and quit in rapid succession the baseball, football, and wrestling teams.

Given the degree of difficulty these adolescents had in functioning in a regular high school environment, it is not surprising that most had serious problems remaining in and graduating from high school. Several were repeating grades they had failed with little hope of ever graduating. Others simply dropped out prior to graduation with no intention of returning. For many of these youngsters, instead of being a way-station between childhood and adulthood, high school seemed to one degree or another to represent a dead end.

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

In addition to affecting their school adaptation, the marijuana-abusing adolescents' difficulties at home and their pervasive feelings about themselves as damaged, incompetent, or inadequate carried over into their relationships with other youngsters. Most of the adolescent marijuana abusers had friends of both sexes, the majority of whom were other heavy marijuana smokers. They tended to be uncomfortable when alone and would invariably "hang out" with others in preference to spending time by themselves.

Almost all in the group sold marijuana to friends as a way of paying for their own supply. For some, however, selling was a lucrative business. One young man functioned as a wholesaler, linking a main supplier and a small group of friends, who in turn dealt to others. Several of the adolescents grew marijuana themselves, including one young man who was eventually arrested for attempting to grow marijuana in a field alongside a country road.

The adolescent marijuana abusers smoked with their friends at special "hang outs," while riding around in cars, and at parties. Common leisure activities included throwing frisbees and listening to music while high on marijuana. Traditional high school clubs and organizations, including athletics, were usually disavowed. Unable to find a satisfying place for themselves in the structured world of the high school, most of these adolescents appeared to find an alternative in their attachment to a loosely knit group of other marijuana-abusing youngsters.

Many of them, however, fluctuated in the extent of their drug use and in their attachment to drug-abusing peers. During periods of greatest marijuana abuse they gravitated toward other drug abusers, but at times when they curtailed their use of marijuana, nondrug-abusing friends tended to become more important to them. For the boys, these periods of curtailment sometimes were found to coincide with renewed involvement in high school sports, while for several of the girls, they followed a breakup with a drug-abusing boyfriend.

Consistent with research findings reported by others (Goode 1972; Jessor and Jessor 1975) the marijuana-abusing participants in this study tended to have sexual experiences at an early age, significantly earlier than their nondrug-abusing siblings. All of the abusers, for example, had had sexual relations involving intercourse. Virtually all of them, however, exhibited significant difficulties in establishing ongoing meaningful relationships.

Brief, intense attachments to friends of both sexes were commonly seen. Particularly in the case of boy-girl relationships, the youngsters' attachments were stormy and characterized by fights, breakups, reconciliations, and recriminations. For many of the girls, their relationships exposed them to considerable risk, including the risk of pregnancy. In spite of the frequency of sexual encounters, regular use of contraceptives was extremely rare, and several of the girls had had abortions. In addition, an attraction to physically abusive young men was fairly common among these girls, as was frequenting dangerous places. One young suburban girl, for example, had a habit of hitchhiking in strange places late at night. Once she and a girlfriend were picked up, taken into the central city, and barely escaped being forced into prostitution. This behavior reflected the themes of self-destructiveness and fatalism which were earlier discussed in relation to the adolescents' feelings about themselves.

The young men also appeared to have difficulty forming close relationships which gave them positive feelings about themselves; for many, their marijuana use appeared to be related to this fact. Several spoke of increasing their use of marijuana in an attempt to deal with anxieties surrounding emotional and sexual intimacy, while for others the precipitating factor was breaking up with a girlfriend on whom they had become dependent.

The willingness of many of the marijuana-abusing girls to expose themselves to physical abuse and danger had a comparable pattern among the boys in their behavior with their cars, motorbikes, and motorcycles, around which a significant part of their leisure time activities revolved. Driving without a license at excessive speed and in a reckless manner, one 14-year-old lost control and smashed up the family car. A second young man tore off his scrotum in a reckless motorcycle accident and required extensive surgery to repair the damage. Another young man was killed shortly after he completed his interviews when his motorbike crashed into a truck. A fourth youngster rode his motorcycle on a rough trail in the woods while drunk or stoned, convinced that nothing could happen to him despite numerous accidents.

Overall, then, these youngsters, while often seeming to be relaxed and comfortable in casual relationships, did not evidence a significant capacity to relate with peers in a way which was both self-protective and genuinely caring and protective of others. Rather, their interactions with their friends, like so much of their behavior in school, reflected the same impulsive, destructive, and self-destructive qualities which characterized their relationships with their families. How such behavior developed, how it was related to the psychodynamics of the youngsters and their families, and what role marijuana played in their attempts to deal with their problems becomes more evident in the detailed picture of several representative cases which are presented in the next chapter.

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Chapter 4

Representative Cases

This chapter presents six of the representative cases of marijuana-abusing adolescents seen in this study. Although each of the six cases is unique in its own way, as a group they demonstrate the most significant behavioral and psychodynamic patterns which were identified.*

Angela A

At 14, Angela was short, stocky, and fair; she had an attractive pleasant face. Her speech, mannerisms, and dress were those of a tomboy from a poor neighborhood. Although not a member of a gang, she frequently wore a shiny, bright colored battle jacket with a name across the back that suggested a gang uniform. She had found a social world in a life of getting drugs, taking drugs, and talking about them, explaining that she could not relate to people who were not on drugs.

Angela's marijuana use had started when she was 11 years old. By the time she was 13 she had also tried virtually every illicit drug, including heroin. She was a particularly heavy user of marijuana, smoking it on the way to school, during lunch hour, after school, and until she went to bed. To finance her marijuana use, she stole from her parents and others, dealt in drugs and went around with a group of girls who intimidated and robbed other youngsters. She sometimes obtained money by arranging for more attractive girlfriends to sleep with older men and sharing the profits and admitted to accepting money once for a sexual involvement herself. Although she was articulate and perceptive, she had been in trouble in school for poor work, truancy, and being high in class.

Angela blamed her marijuana use on the constant friction and fights in her family. Her father, who worked evenings and nights as a bartender, frequently came home drunk in the early morning and was often verbally and physically abusive to the rest of the family. Her mother had no control over the children. Angela said, "As long as life in the family is the way it is and they don't change, why should I change?". She said her use of marijuana made her feel less depressed about her life.

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*All names and identifying features have been changed.

The A's were an Italian family who lived in a black and Puerto Rican neighborhood. Mrs. A blamed some of the family's difficulties on the neighborhood, complaining that her husband had promised to move when the children were older, but never did.

In addition to Angela, the A's had a daughter, Lisa, who was one year older than Angela and a son, Tony, who was four years younger. The family had been closer and happier during the first six years of Angela's life. It was not until Tony's birth that Mr. A had begun to work as a bartender and to drink immoderately. Tony, at the age of 10, was withdrawing from the disorganization and tension of the family into an asocial, isolated life in which he was preoccupied with suicide. He would not close the door when he went to the toilet out of fear of bodily dissolution.

Lisa was a tall, blond, attractive young woman who seemed several years older than her actual age of 15. Drugs had never been a problem for her; her main concern was boys for whom she wished to maintain a glamorous image. She had been caught several times stealing clothes which she felt she needed to maintain such an image. Although she came to the interviews several times with Angela, and would talk freely in the waiting room, she said she could not be interviewed because her boyfriend objected strenuously to it. Angela and her mother thought he was afraid Lisa would reveal his involvement in her shoplifting and his sexual history -- he had made several neighborhood girls pregnant. When Lisa was 16, she too became pregnant with his child, but shortly thereafter they began to live together and eventually married.

Mr. A said when he met his wife everything was wonderful between them; they were even more in love when their first two children were little. He did not know what changed things, but wondered if he had been too strict. He said he would frequently come home to a messy house and would become angry that his wife could not manage better.

Mr. A said he went to work as a bartender to earn more money, but laughed at, without dismissing, the possibility that he used the job to get away from his wife and family. He and Mrs. A never went out alone because he did not like to leave the children for fear of what they would do. He denied he had a drinking problem although Angela, Lisa, and his wife insisted that he frequently came home intoxicated and that it was at these times that he was physically abusive.

Mr. A said he favored neither of his two daughters and would do anything for either of them, but felt his wife had always favored Angela and was jealous of Lisa. He recounted how Mrs. A would become upset and start a quarrel if he told Lisa how pretty she was. Mr. A described Angela as sometimes lovely and considerate and at other times belligerent and arrogant.

Mr. A's own parents had also quarreled most of the time. His father worked long hours in a fish market and his mother felt he had no time for the family. Mr. A had quit school at 16 to work with his father; he lived with his father and an older married sister after his mother died. He was still close to his family but did not want them to learn of Angela's difficulties at school or her use of drugs.

Mrs. A showed pride and affection in describing her husband in the early years of their relationship. When she met Mr. A she was involved with another man who was sadistic and unfaithful. She had met Mr. A in the bar they all frequented and even before she was involved with him, he warned her boyfriend to stop beating her and later hit him when he continued to abuse her. She admired her husband's courage in scaring away a black man who was interested in Lisa when she was only 13. She compared her husband when angry to James Cagney.

Since he had become a bartender, Mrs. A. felt his anger had been directed mainly toward her. When he was drunk he would call her an ugly hag and would beat her and their daughters. Sex between them stopped some years ago, and they began sleeping in separate bedrooms.

Although Mrs. A had put her husband out of the house a few years earlier because of his physical abusiveness, she was totally unable to control the children when he was away and began to drink heavily herself. During this period, Angela began to bring her friends to her room at night, and they would drink or smoke marijuana while Mrs. A would go to the neighborhood bars. After a year, Mrs. A asked Mr. A to come home and he did.

Mrs. A agreed that her husband favored neither child, but felt he gave Lisa more money because Lisa asked him for it. She felt he would have given Angela what she asked for as well, but Angela was not the sort who would ask. She said that while he still gave their children material things, he had stopped being involved with them when they were no longer little. She described Angela as "good, passionate, warm, and bright."

Mrs. A was worried about Angela's school work, her drug use, and her sexual behavior. She had read in Angela's diary of her sexual encounters with a married man in the back of his car. She saw Lisa as cold and unaffectionate and complained that when Lisa fought with her, her husband sided with Lisa.

Mrs. A liked to talk of her glamorous life working as a hostess in supper clubs before her marriage. She yearned to be young again, have her looks back, and have a lot of money. In her neighborhood, she said, she "stands out like Marilyn Monroe." She spoke of wanting a man to take her to Argentina; she said she would be the only bleached blond there.

Her own childhood and family life had been even more insecure and precarious than her present life. Her mother, whom she described as a "gregarious swinger," left her, her father, and sister when she was six years old. She lived with her father, sister, and aunt for the next nine years. At 15, without explanation, she was put on a train and made to rejoin her mother who had married a man 20 years her junior. Mrs. A was tearful in recounting how she had been sent away to rejoin her mother and in describing what she and Mr. A had lost. She showed the same mixture of admiration and affection mixed with sadness and disappointment in discussing both Angela and her husband. She was like Angela in that if she felt uncared for, she let everything go.

Angela expressed considerable conscious desire for change. She talked of not wanting to end up as others she had known on her block. Partly because of this attitude on her part, she aroused a sympathetic protectiveness in the interviewer as well as in most of her teachers. She did not want treatment, however, but was willing to come in for a few visits periodically to discuss what was going on in her life.

Angela said her father could be pleasant to her at times, but at others he disparaged the way she looked or hit her for not having done what he wanted. Although she became angry with her father when he beat or insulted her, she blamed her mother more than her father for the family's difficulties. She had urged her mother to get rid of him, but held her mother responsible for the family's difficulties after he left and finally persuaded her to take him back. Once, when she saw her mother drinking in the street during the period when her father was away, Angela deliberately overdosed on drugs.

Angela saw herself as having a terrible temper and recalled how she used to break windows in the house when she became angry. She fought with her sister who resented her mother's favoritism toward Angela, although she blamed her mother for creating the problem.

During the period in which the family was being seen, Mrs. A was diagnosed as having an inoperable uterine cancer. Angela found herself also blaming her mother for her illness, but thought at times that her death would be a relief because it would stop the fights between her sister and herself.

As her mother became sicker, Angela had to take care of her and the house. Her father was obliged to be nice to her mother, so he had begun to yell more at Angela. She thought a great deal about her mother's death and about the responsibility for her brother that would fall on her shoulders. Around this same time, her father had a mild heart attack. Angela told him that she blamed herself, feeling that worries she had caused him were responsible for his illness.

She began doing somewhat better in school partly because of help and support given her by several teachers. She felt pride and pleasure at her parents' satisfaction over this and hoped her mother would be well enough to attend her junior high school graduation. She liked to come for interviews when she had something favorable to report; otherwise, she preferred not to. If things were bad, she said she was afraid she would lie and cover up which she did a lot and considered one of her worst faults.

During this period she spent many of her weekends at the home of a former teacher at her school, a woman who with her husband had befriended her. They spent a considerable amount of time with her and often took her out to play tennis or to the movies. Angela liked them and had fantasies of living with them permanently, but admitted she could not enjoy the things she did with them because around them she was not able to get high.

Angela became involved sexually with a new boyfriend, a young Hispanic named Charles. She blamed the fact that she often felt no sexual desire on the fact that she had started her sexual life too young. Several dreams about her relationship with Charles suggested a linkage between her lack of sexual desire and her relationship with her parents.

She dreamed that Charles was in her room with no clothes on. The telephone rang in the next room and he jumped to answer it. She yelled not to, but he did not listen. Her father was in the other room. Charles came back with her father running after him. She cringed in the bed.

Angela said that they slept together in her room, but hid it from her parents. He always left before her father came back from work, but she was nervous about being caught. She also took no precautions to prevent pregnancy and had some anxiety over this.

Although she saw her father as frightening, Angela, like her mother, had positive feelings toward him. She arranged a surprise party for his birthday in a rented hall, and its success meant a great deal to her. Her sexual relationship in her home and her dreams of discovery by her father may suggest both oedipal feelings and her defense against them.

Discussion of the above dream seemed to have been the stimulus for another of Angela's dreams. There was snow and ice on the ground. Her mother was across the street shopping. She was trying to get to her mother when a young man with a Spanish accent stopped her and frightened her, saying she had to have sex with him. She yelled "rape," two men came, and the Spanish fellow ran away. Angela kept running, looking for her mother.

The threat of actual punishment from her father was less significant in its impact than her fear of losing her mother, represented in the dream by her mother's being separated from her by a street covered with snow and ice. Some months later, after her mother's death, Angela stopped having sex with Charles completely, saying that her mother was with her all the time, and that previously she could hide it from her but now she saw everything. As important as the actual content of Angela's dreams is the degree of emotional involvement and tension with her parents that they reflect -- an involvement that supports the family contention of an original greater closeness.

During the same period that she had the above dream she was asked to make up a fairy tale as a school assignment. She was pleased to be asked to read and discuss it during her interviews. The story, just as she wrote it, went as follows:

THE PRINCESS'S GOOD LUCK

> Once upon a time, a princess by the name of Angela lived far in the woods with her father, King Joe, and her mean brother, Prince Peter. Her mother and father had gotten divorced when she was very little. She used to go and pick blueberries every day, and take long walks in the woods. Her father would get mad if she didn't pick a certain amount of blueberries everyday because she would make pies and all kinds of deserts (sic) and he would sell them. He had a pie-making industry called Joe & Daughter, Inc. He would beat her and sent her to bed with no dinner. Her brother, Prince Pete, would also treat her very mean. He killed her pet dog and burned all her Seventeen magazines. He wouldn't allow her to see any boys. She was also very beautiful but she was not allowed to look at herself in the mirror. Everyday her father and brother would tell her how ugly she was. One day her brother decided to kill her. So he poisoned all the blueberry bushes. While picking blueberries she got stuck by a thorn and soon died. When she again opened her eyes she was in a terrible forest. There were dead bushes and people standing behind trees laughing at her. Then came this twinkle. It was a good fairy. "In order to get back from where you came from," the good fairy said, "someone has to have a good thought about you." Then she disappeared. Her brother, wanting to make sure she's dead, goes to stab her with a sword but before he could, this toad, hanging out by his favorite pond yelled, "No, you can't stab her, she's so beautiful." All of a sudden the Princess comes back to life, kills her brother with the sword, poisons her father's blueberry pie, and she and the toad live happily ever after.

Although Angela had often wished to be rid of her mother, and blamed her for her inability to cope with her father, for the friction between her sister and herself, and for the disintegration of the family, she suggested in her fairy tale some anticipation that the friction might increase when her mother died.

The toad is probably a self-representation. Interestingly, it does not turn into a prince as is usual in such tales. Angela's sense of ugliness appeared to derive from the family situation in general and her father's treatment of her in particular. She was bound to have some sensitivity about his disparagement of her appearance and his complimentary remarks concerning her sister's attractiveness. She had no female rivals in the tale since her mother and sister were not in the story. Her sister who was often mean to her was probably represented as Prince Pete. This may have made it easier to deal with the sister whose attractiveness was hard to compete with and may have contributed to Angela's tomboy attitude. In the fairy tale, this sibling was stopping her from going out with boys. After taking effective action against the father and brother she again became a princess, came to terms with the toad in her self, and lived more happily with herself. Angela's sense that there was something attractive or worthwhile about herself that was being prevented from expressing itself suggested some core of intact self-esteem that was consistent with her actual behavior. Her more direct actions against the brother in the dream perhaps acknowledged a displacement of feelings toward the father which were inhibited by her fear of him.

When Angela was seen after her mother died, she said she had at first been angry with her for leaving her the responsibility of caring for the home. In particular she felt responsible for her young brother to whom she was serving as a surrogate mother, preparing his meals and seeing that he did his school work. In addition she had a weekend job in a supermarket. Her father was at first critical of her housekeeping and abusive toward her, but when she told him she was doing her best and would leave if he did not stop, he stopped.

Although Angela attributed her loss of sexual interest partly to her mother's death, her mother's absence had no such effect on her use of drugs. One of the men she worked with dealt in marijuana; he would come over most nights of the week and they would smoke steadily for several hours together. On weekends after finishing up at the supermarket she drank heavily with a group from work, all of whom were older than she. She would often consume a quart of whiskey during a single night.

Angela managed to continue in school, to more or less care for the house and her brother, and to hold her job. She saw marijuana as lightening her mood and contributing to the funny, witty way she tried at times to use in dealing with the pressures of her life. She felt she had a funny word for everyone when she was high and was admired for her sense of humor. She attempted to be entertaining in her interviews as well, but admitted eventually that she feared the interviewer and other people would not like her if she were not this way. Marijuana helped her achieve some detachment from the anger and resentment her life aroused. Her enormous weekend consumption of alcohol after her mother died appeared to be a further attempt to escape the increased tension and responsibility of her life.

She was in mourning not so much for her mother as for the life with her parents she had lost years before. Her initial remark that if her family did not change, she would not, suggested that if they did not care for her enough to make the family work, she could not care enough about herself to give up marijuana. Now that it was clear that the family would not change in a way that benefited her, she resisted the possibility of change on her part. When her teacher befriended her and offered her the possibility of a different life, Angela still thought it was better to get high. Marijuana has been her buffer against change as well as disappointment in relations with people. In her fairy tale, it was not another person with whom she lived happily ever after, but a self-image, the toad.

Clara D

Clara D had pleasant features but was thin, pale, nervous in manner, and almost sickly in appearance. She played with her cigarette in a manner that had burned and ruined many of her good clothes and was also suggestive of the self-destructive quality of her behavior. When first seen Clara was 15 years old, but she had been smoking marijuana since she was 11. During the past year she had become a heavy user, smoking before school, during lunch, and throughout the day. She sold pot when she needed money, and at times the sales had netted her considerable profit.

Clara was referred by a physician who saw her after she had taken 9 or 10 sleeping pills following a fight with her parents over her boyfriend. Her drug involvement had been influenced by this young man whose behavior revolved around drinking wine and smoking pot. Her parents did not know of her marijuana abuse or that her boyfriend was also a drug abuser. They threatened to stop her from seeing him because they were upset that she was not doing her schoolwork and was not coming home right after school. They did not tell Clara, but they were also afraid she would become sexually involved with him. They did not know that she already was.

Clara had had longstanding difficulties at school. According to her mother, she was restless, talked in class, and in the first two grades "stole everything in sight." Although the stealing stopped, problems with her school work and classroom behavior continued to the point where she had been required to leave several different schools.

Clara was seen by her family as a devil. Her 17-year-old sister, Vanessa, was considered an angel, and both girls seemed to try to act out their roles. Clara was described by her parents as defiant, disobedient, and "fresh." Her father was particularly upset by her lying and her mother by her poor schoolwork. Vanessa was seen by the family as more intelligent, more attractive, more popular, and better adjusted. Whatever was confident and secure in the parent's relationship was focused on Vanessa, while Clara was the focus of all their anxiety and discontent.

The D's were an upper-middle-class family living in a fashionable urban neighborhood with both their children in private schools. Mr. D had worked as an executive for a variety of firms, but had had moderately long periods of unemployment between positions. Mrs. D had worked continually as a librarian since her children were little. Although he was Protestant and she was Catholic, they had both been raised with a puritanical strictness and that attitude was reflected in the way in which they treated their daughters.

The D's were firm about the hours their daughters kept and about their daughters' friends. They required the girls to come home and stay home after school, unless they had received specific approval from them to do otherwise. Mrs. D was constantly worried that her daughters would be mugged, raped, or murdered, and a tense overprotectiveness characterized her relations with them. Vanessa reassured her mother, calling her, for example, if she wanted to stay out beyond an agreed-upon hour. She was given more freedom and did not feel imprisoned as Clara often did.

Mrs. D was attractive, vivacious, and tense. She felt her husband only married her because she was pregnant and she would not have an abortion. She believed he stayed with her only because of the children and was more involved with the family now because of Clara's problems.

She considered Mr. D to be a failure as a provider, as a father, and as a husband. She often compared Clara to her husband, saying they were both unaffectionate, irresponsible, unappreciative, and uncommunicative. She saw herself as unable to manage without her husband, but said she might have been better off if he had left in the past as he had threatened. She had virtually stopped a sexual life with him, saying he used her only to satisfy his needs and that she was starved for affection. She did not see his constancy, fidelity, or sexual interest as signs of his affection.

Mrs. D had lived with a lifelong insecurity concerning the men in her life. Her father, a relatively wealthy American, met and married her mother, a French woman, while he was on a visit to France. He left the family when Mrs. D was three years old, returning to America to settle his business affairs. The family did not join him in this country until Mrs. D was nine. Since he continued an affair he was having, Mrs. D felt that her mother would have returned to France if the war had not made it impossible Her mother essentially raised Mrs. D and her sister by herself, as strict Catholics. They were not allowed to date until they were in college.

Mr. D, who was seen by his family as unaffectionate and uninvolved, came himself from a family where there had been no affection between his parents whom he described as puritanical Baptists. His father worried and irritated his mother because he was away a great deal of the time in connection with his work and did not let her know where he was. The mother managed without the father, and Mr. D believed she did not expect her husband to be involved with the children or with family problems. Mr. D saw both his father and his brother, who rebelled against the puritanical atmosphere of the home, as more successful than himself; and he saw his mother as a better manager than his wife.

When Mrs. D asked for reassurance or expressed doubts about his feelings for her, Mr. D confirmed her fears by telling her he was not particularly in love with her or excited by their being together. On the other hand he had never been more excited by any other woman before or since his marriage. He was sexually attracted to his wife and had been faithful to her. He was also not affectionate with his daughters whom he said he did love. He seemed to care for his wife as much as he was capable of caring for a woman.

Clara and Vanessa were close enough in age to share some of the same friends, although the drug abusers among their friends became more important to Clara than to Vanessa. Clara fluctuated in the intensity of her marijuana abuse, and during the periods of her greatest abuse she gravitated more towards other drug abusers. Vanessa had experimented with drugs from time to time but had rejected the image of the drug user.

Clara formed intense attachments with her friends, but these relationships were stormy and short-lived. Vanessa had had more stable relationships with peers of both sexes.

Clara was more active sexually than Vanessa, although she showed a good deal of shame and guilt about her sexual behavior. She had also been involved in relationships with young men who abused her. When confronted with young men who seemed genuinely to care for her she became acutely uncomfortable. She clung to her most recent boyfriend in a dependent way, although he appeared to have lost interest in her and mistreated her. In her sexual involvement with him and with other boys she took no precautions to prevent pregnancy.

Clara was depressed, frequently thought about death, and believed she did not have long to live. She had made cuts in her face after a fight with her mother and related her occasional use of amphetamines and tranquilizers to her desire to do harm to herself.

Clara complained that her parents did not give her enough freedom and did not trust her as they did her sister, but she behaved in ways that caused them to restrict her further and trust her even less. She was conscious of trying to provoke and infuriate her mother.

Clara dreamed on two occasions that she was with friends going inside a haunted house. The devil was inside the house and there was some danger the devil would get inside her. Her friends disappeared, and she was left alone outside the house, frightened and crying.

She had often used the word "devil" to describe herself, adding that that was how her parents saw her. She related this dream to a television movie about a girl who was possessed and could levitate tables. She had not been allowed to see "The Exorcist," a type of film that terrified and fascinated her. The dream suggested both fear of the devil inside her taking over her personality and her sense that this aspect of her behavior isolated her from other people. Not surprisingly, Clara had retained her childhood fear of the dark. If alone in the dark, she feared a man would kill her or a monster would take her to another world.

Vanessa repeated twice during her first interview that she was no angel, but it was clear she felt she was expected to be one. Vanessa had had boyfriends but had never had sexual relations. She felt she must not misbehave or let her mother know any of her troubles because her mother already had so many problems with Clara. She smoked cigarettes outside the house but hid this from her parents.

Vanessa had tried to tell them that she was now, for the first time, doing poorly in school, but they would not hear her. This made her extremely anxious because of her awareness of how important her school performance was to her parents and particularly to her mother. In talking of this, she recounted an instance where Mrs. D had encouraged Vanessa to lie and say she had received a 98 on a regents exam instead of the 94 she had actually received because another girl in their apartment building had received a 97. She blamed her recent poor marks on the tensions in the house, the same reason given by Clara for her need to smoke marijuana.

Vanessa felt affection toward her parents, although she wished her mother were less emotional and her father were more involved. Vanessa recognized that she was trusted more and restricted less than Clara, but often felt Clara got more attention for her misbehavior than she did for her good behavior. She cited as evidence the fact that her parents sent Clara to an exclusive private school in the hope she would adjust there (she did not), while saying that they could not afford to send Vanessa to a comparable private school that she wanted very much to attend. Vanessa was protective of Clara, but her resentment came out in dreams in which Clara fell out a window or was hit by a car. Like Clara, she had frequent dreams of monsters coming after her.

How different a response the parents had to misbehavior of their two daughters was revealed when Vanessa forged her mother's signature to a bad report card. When her parents discovered this, her mother was not upset and her father's reaction was that it was a pretty "gutsy" thing to do. He admitted that he would have been infuriated with Clara in the same situation, particularly since lying was the single thing that bothered him most. It was virtually impossible to engage the parents in any problem of Vanessa's or even in the strain she felt at having to have no problems, since they insisted on seeing her as without difficulties.

The difference in parental attitudes toward the two girls started virtually at birth. Vanessa was a wonderful, beautiful baby; Mrs. D was delighted to be married and have a child. She and her husband confirmed they were happy during this period. When Clara was born, Mr. D was often away, traveling in his job or entertaining clients, and Mrs. D would wait up for him to return or to call. She said Clara was a poor sleeper but this may reflect some resonance with her own tension during this period.

A story the family frequently told that occurred when Clara was one year old was felt by Clara to reflect where she stood with them. The family was taking a trip and went off in a cab when they remembered that they had left Clara behind. That the incident occurred was remarkable enough, but that the parents persisted in retelling it as a funny story showed an even more remarkable insensitivity to Clara's feelings.

Clara's current misbehavior made it impossible for her parents to forget her. Vanessa was given more freedom, but neither of the girls was responded to or accepted in terms of her own needs, personality, and possibilities.

Although the D's brought the insecurity of their own backgrounds to their marriage, it was the birth of their children that opened up their individual problems and created difficulties between them. During Clara's adolescence, Mr. and Mrs. D's involvement with her problems might seem to have brought them closer together, but such closeness was largely illusory and relatively short-lived. The need to deal together with the problems created at home or in school by Clara's difficulties suppressed only for a relatively short time the conflicts that were pulling the parents apart.

The split between the good and the bad child was clearly evident in the D family since it involved both parents and was consistently maintained from a period early in the lives of both children. Clara and Vanessa seemed to reflect their parents' picture of them in their current behavior.

The D's attempt to restrict Clara's freedom to a degree not appropriate to her age was an expression of their mistrust of her, which to some degree Clara's provocativeness had surely earned. Yet the parents' restrictions and punishments were also carried out in a provocative way that invited Clara's rebellion.

Clara was unrelenting in her anger toward her parents, expressed affectionate feelings toward them rarely, and was bitterly unforgiving of their deficiencies. Vanessa had feelings of admiration and affection toward both of her parents, accommodated to the difficult aspects of their personalities, and made a successful adjustment at home. Vanessa managed to adjust to the family's rules while Clara fought them in ways that frustrated everyone.

Clara's severe problems at school went back to her early years, but her stealing and behavioral problems at school, which began in the first grade, indicated that emotional difficulties were largely responsible. She was perceptive and articulate, but her lack of general information (her psychological tests revealed that she did not know how many weeks are in a year, located Brazil in Europe, and gave the population of the U.S. as three billion) affected her IQ score (92) and suggested that the degree to which she blocked out learning experiences was more critical in her school difficulties than any lack of intelligence.

Vanessa was as markedly different from Clara in school as she was at home. She had good grades all through school and was liked by her teachers and classmates. Although she had little interest in her work, she tried to do well to please her parents and for the better jobs and greater income an education would bring. Vanessa's marked tension over the need to do well at school seemed to derive from a sense that her acceptance at home was conditional on her good behavior and good performance.

A similar tension pervaded her interviews, where she was far more tense and less emotionally free than Clara. As she opened up the resentment that was underneath her "good girl" adaptation, she became uncomfortable and reluctant to continue.

Both Clara and Vanessa were aware of the blind spots in their parents' perception of them. Clara was disdainful of Vanessa's need to hide her misbehavior from their parents' awareness. And Vanessa felt both uncomfortable with her parents' open favoritism and tense at feeling compelled to try to behave in accord with her parents' picture of her.

Although Clara spoke at first of her drug use in general and marijuana in particular as a conflict-free source of pleasure, in time she expressed more ambivalence about it. She related her use of marijuana to her desire to relax from the tension and anger of her difficulties at home. Eventually she also expressed the feeling that while others probably took drugs for pleasure she took them with something of a self-destructive attitude.

Vanessa was witness to the unfortunate effects of Clara's marijuana abuse on her relationship with their parents and on Clara's life in general. Clara was a role model that she was determined not to follow.

If marijuana made more tolerable the anger and frustration Clara felt in her relations with her family, it did so by encouraging passivity and illusion instead of any effective attempt to improve the situation. Clara used marijuana to reinforce a kind of masochistic passivity. It helped her to feel detached from her anxiety over whether she could change her situation and permitted her to believe she did not care what happened to her or whether she got hurt.

Tim H

Tim H was a slightly built youngster of 17 with attractive facial features, thick, wavy hair, and a casual but neat appearance. Since the age of 14 Tim had been a heavy drug user and had had experience with LSD, amphetamines, barbiturates, cocaine, alcohol, and tranquilizers. Marijuana, however, had consistently been his drug of choice. His pattern of heavy daily smoking was occasionally punctuated with "binges" in which he smoked to the point where he felt totally "burned out."

The past several years had been marked by almost constant conflict between Tim and his parents, centering on his refusal to perform routine household chores, to keep agreed-upon curfews, or to obtain permission for frequent overnight trips, especially to out-of-town rock concerts.

Beginning in 9th grade, Tim's previously excellent performance in school took an abrupt change. He began coming unprepared to class, then started cutting particular classes, and soon began skipping whole days. Eventually this behavior resulted in his failing and having to repeat the 12th grade. He was referred to the study by his high school principal who correctly suspected that Tim's school troubles were related to marijuana abuse.

Tim's only sibling, 19-year-old Dennis, provided a stark contrast to Tim, both physically and behaviorally. A six-foot tall, stocky, and conservatively dressed young man, Dennis when first seen was finishing a year of preparatory work after high school prior to entering a military academy. Although he and his parents said he was less intelligent than Tim, Dennis was ambitious, demanding, and usually successful in getting what he wanted. Within the family he had assumed a position of control, dominating conversations and taking over the family sailboat to become an accomplished racing competitor. Dennis' attitude toward Tim was generally protective and reflected concern over Tim's problems, which he attributed to a lack of motivation and drive and to Tim's unwillingness to take advantage of his capacities and abilities.

Mr. and Mrs. H lived in and were part of a fashionable upper-middle class, predominantly white Protestant, suburban community. Both worked hard, Mr. H as a stockbroker and Mrs. H as a nurse, and both expected hard work and achievement from their children. They were concerned with being seen by their neighbors as a respectable family. For several years before Tim discovered marijuana, however, Mr. H had had a serious drinking problem which was accompanied by frequent, openly displayed physical abuse of his wife. Mr. H described his relationship with Mrs. H as not having worked even before he had started drinking, and stated that he had remained in the marriage out of convenience and because he associated divorce with failure.

Almost from the beginning of their relationship, he began having extramarital affairs, the latest one lasting for the past five years. Mr. H attributed this to sexual incompatibility with his wife which he felt resulted from his more extensive premarital sexual experience. Although describing Mrs. H as an intelligent and well-educated young woman at the time they met, he acknowledged that he had never been truly in love with her but thought they shared enough common intellectual interests and cultural values to justify the marriage. His early perception of their sexual incompatibility was further exacerbated by Mrs. H's difficulty in conceiving children and her two cesarean deliveries. Mr. H was repulsed by the physical disfigurement resulting from these operations and withdrew even further. Subsequently, Mr. H had been able to have sex with his wife only when he was intoxicated.

Mr. H regarded himself as isolated from his sons as a result of his wife's having "taken over" during his frequent business-related absences from home. At the same time he admitted he had allowed the isolation to develop out of his own desire to be relieved of the burden of child care.

In Mr. H's eyes, Dennis was an aggressive, take-charge person who used his considerable temper to get what he wanted and gain control over the family. The clash between them had resulted for several years in frequent "knock down and drag out" fist fights, stemming primarily from Dennis' attempt to defend his mother and Tim from his father's abusiveness. In contrast to his feelings toward Dennis, Mr. H identified with what he perceived in Tim as a drive toward perfection and a terror at the idea of failure.

He described his own father as a successful but domineering and frightened man who placed his children under constant pressure to excel. The stories he recounted of Tim as a young child studying to learn the alphabet and becoming terribly upset at each mistake, or of Tim becoming "jammed up" on his homework in elementary school, spending so much time trying to make a perfect cover for a report that he had no time left for writing the report, appeared to contain a familiar pain for Mr. H. He spoke of his own shyness, insecurity, and unhappiness which he tried to hide from others through his excessive drinking. He described his life as meaningless and hopeless, and for many years he had thoughts of suicide.

While instinctively understanding the roots of much of Tim's behavior, Mr. H did not make the connection with marijuana abuse. His proposed solution to Tim's problems was to get him accepted into an excellent college by submitting Dennis' superior high school records and simply having Tim pretend to be Dennis while at school. Mr. H indicated little awareness of how such a plan would contribute to the way Tim had suffered since childhood from being overshadowed and dominated by Dennis, which Mr. H acknowledged and described in some detail.

Mrs. H, although similarly avoiding recognition of Tim's heavy marijuana use, was generally less compassionate toward him. The oldest child of Dutch immigrant parents, Mrs. H, from an early age, had been expected to perform a variety of tasks for her parents who lacked English literacy, and this seemed to have formed the basis for her high expectations of her own children. Although Mrs. H had not felt particularly close to her parents, she attributed her success in pursuing her education to their strong emphasis on academic achievement, and this too was mirrored in her relationship with her sons.

She described her relationship with Mr. H as having been emotionally distant from the beginning and felt this had been the cause of their longstanding sexual difficulties. She had wanted to seek help for their sexual problems, but her sense of her own inexperience and her fear of her husband's "put downs" prevented her from taking any action.

During her first difficult pregnancy and Dennis' birth, Mr. H's indifference and lack of support, she believed, set the tone for the rest of their relationship. Despite two earlier unsuccessful attempts to leave her husband, Mrs. H insisted she was now merely waiting for her sons to be out of the house before she filed for divorce. Although she had previously been protective of Mr. H and his drinking problem, she now spoke in a strikingly cold and dispassionate way of waiting for him to so incapacitate himself through drinking that she could "dump him" at a nursing home to die by himself. Unable to confront the pain, anguish, and disappointment she felt in her marriage, Mrs. H resorted to "blotting out" the problems and emotionally withdrawing from her husband.

Although a second child was unplanned, Mrs. H regarded with some pride the fact that she had had both Dennis and Tim during a single two-year maternity leave. Following Tim's birth, she immediately returned to her job as a nurse, leaving the boys in the care of two young foreign women. Mr. H. believed that his wife felt considerable guilt over not remaining at home during Tim's infancy, in light of her strong sense of duty and her need to abide by the rules of her Dutch upbringing.

Mrs. H was particularly proud of both boys when they were young because of their good looks, which were frequently complimented. Her recollections of them as they grew older, however, and of Tim in particular, were far less positive. She likened Tim to a "baby orangutan," attributing his clinginess to his brief hospital stay for a hernia repair at the age of 13 months. Following this, she described him as having extreme problems with separation, especially at bedtime. She also recalled that Tim was quite jealous of any attention she paid to Dennis and that he always tried to push his older brother out of the limelight. In addition, Mrs. H indicated that Tim was a poor eater throughout his childhood, and had to be cajoled and begged to eat anything. Her continued preoccupation with his eating habits was reflected again and again in her remarks.

Throughout the interviews, Mrs. H often presented inconsistent or contradictory pictures of Tim's early childhood, describing him alternatively as a good and a poor sleeper, and as both a sociable and an isolated, withdrawn child. When questioned about these contradictions she explained that she had trouble remembering dates and that perhaps her descriptions belonged to different periods of Tim's childhood. Despite her negative remarks about him she described Tim as a "charming, winsome" child and insisted that she regarded him as the "favorite" of her two sons.

Tim's recent academic problems were a source of considerable anguish to Mrs. H. She saw these as stemming from his deliberate unwillingness to perform up to his abilities. As was the case with her reaction to her husband, Mrs. H responded to her own hurt and disappointment at Tim's failure to meet her expectations by emotionally withdrawing and convincing herself she had done all she could to help.

Tim was in considerable turmoil about his family relationships, seeing himself as cut off from each of his parents and from his brother. Although he acknowledged the protective role which his brother Dennis had adopted towards him, Tim saw his relationship with Dennis largely in terms of competition and struggle. He was acutely conflicted in his feelings toward Dennis, worrying both about being unable to compete successfully with him and about crushing his brother's spirit by beating him in some form of competition.

Because of the proximity of their ages, Tim and Dennis had spent most of their early years playing together as close friends. Once Tim was old enough to venture away from home, however, he quickly made friends with other children, leaving Dennis feeling left out and deserted. Dennis resented Tim's greater popularity among the neighborhood youngsters and recalled painful memories of being ridiculed about being fat. He reacted by frequently beating up Tim in an attempt to get from him the friendship and loyalty he failed to find with other children.

Within the family, Dennis seized every opportunity to take responsibility and act in a position of authority because of the respect and trust this earned with his parents. At school Dennis successfully drew on his family experience to create roles for himself which allowed him to exercise responsibility over other students, in particular by serving throughout high school as stage manager for a drama club with over 100 members. Playing a "straight" role was also a key aspect of Dennis' adaptation, and since this included being vigilant and in control, he would not experiment with alcohol or drugs.

Through his indulgence in drugs and his adoption of an antiachievement attitude, Tim was able to create an identity and a lifestyle that was the opposite of his brother's, and he thus avoided even a hint of competition or comparison. As Tim described it, "My brother took the straight road and I took the high road." Tim's heavy marijuana use also helped him escape from the painful and angry feelings he associated with each of his parents, which were linked in particular to having witnessed several of his father's alcohol-inspired assaults on his mother. As a youngster Tim recalled having idealized his father. Now he loathed him and saw him as a "disgusting drunk." He also had contempt for his mother whom he saw as weak, passive, and pitiful for having tolerated his father's abuse.

Tim's anger at his parents, and particularly his mother, was bolstered by what he felt were their inflexible performance expectations and his inability to meet them. He remembered that even as a little child he was always expected to be perfectly well-behaved when his parents had company. Later, as an adolescent, when he became interested in music and showed considerable talent in playing the trombone, his parents began pushing him first to join the school band and then to compete for a position on the county high school marching band. Although he succeeded in gaining a position, he dropped out after a short time, feeling that the once pleasurable activity of playing an instrument had been robbed of all enjoyment because of the pressure from his parents and the constant need to meet their expectations. It was at about this time that Tim began smoking marijuana regularly and heavily.

Tim's view of himself as unable to meet his parents' expectations was linked to his sense of his mother as not buying or preparing enough food for him throughout his childhood and not feeding him properly up to the present time. The lack of nuturance he perceived in his relationship with his mother and the connection between this and his marijuana use were reflected in a dream Tim reported in one of his interviews. It occurred shortly after attending a concert given by the rock band Pink Floyd, in which the group had used some large puppets as part of their performance. In the dream, one of the puppets called "Mother Floyd" was coming after him and he was trying to hide from her. They ended up having a conversation in which she suggested that he was angry because someone else had gotten newspaper publicity instead of him. She then made him a cup of tea, which Tim suspected she had drugged. The tea was lukewarm and looked disgusting. On the bottom of the cup Tim saw marijuana seeds which confirmed his suspicions that "Mother Floyd" had drugged the tea.

In discussing the dream Tim immediately associated "Mother Floyd" to his mother and the disgusting tea to the food his mother cooked which he described as inedible and claimed she "just sort of slops down even though she knows I'm not going to eat it." That his mother might be serving him poisoned tea Tim likened to the way "she starts off hassling me right in the beginning of the morning," thus "poisoning" his day, as he had frequently heard his father describe his wife's affect on those around her. The association of marijuana with poison was also suggested by Tim's connection of the word "tea" as slang for marijuana, and his sense of how he was poisoning himself through his frequent binges and burnouts which rendered him unable to think or function. Tim admitted that although it often seemed that it was his mother who was poisoning him, he realized he was actually poisoning himself. As in the dream where the tea-drinking occured in the context of anger over newspaper publicity given to another person, he recognized that his feelings toward his mother were partially rooted in his jealousy of the greater attention and recognition she gave to Dennis.

Despite the considerable differences in their behavior, both Tim and Dennis were quite similar in the insecurity, self-consciousness, and discomfort each felt in interpersonal relationships and particularly in relationships with girls. Dennis spoke quite freely of his exaggerated inhibitions about making sexual overtures toward the girls he dated and his concern that this might lead them to question his masculinity. On one occasion he became so upset over his suspicion that two girls were talking about him behind his back that he assaulted one of them and almost broke her arm. In a later, more serious relationship, Dennis talked of worrying constantly that his girlfriend was being unfaithful to him and had recurrent dreams of attacking another young man for making sexual advances to her.

Tim was also extremely troubled in his relationships with his friends, seeing himself as inadequate and physically "deformed." His preoccupation with and devaluation of his physical characteristics, including his small size, a fully corrected childhood lisp, and his hernia surgery as an infant, reflected a sense of himself as damaged and debased. He also indicated considerable confusion and fragmentation in his sexual identity. In his early teens he had one homosexual experience involving mutual fellatio. Although he had not repeated it, his enjoyment of the experience and his recurrent homosexual fantasies troubled him deeply.

During the period in which he was interviewed, Tim became briefly involved in two sexual relationships with young women. In both he experienced intense anxiety about his ability to perform at what he imagined to be acceptable standards, which resulted in either impotence or premature ejaculation.

The sharp behavioral contrast between these two siblings resulted from their differing experiences in, and different adaptations to, an unhappy family. Probably as a result of the greater maternal care and attention he received during infancy, Dennis was able to deal with his subsequent doubts and fears by taking charge and being in command. Finding a place for himself in the family and in school where he could gain respect through exercising control and responsibility allowed him to cope relatively well with his underlying feelings of insecurity and his fears concerning other people's caring and loyalty.

Tim, on the other hand, was badly damaged by the lack of nurturance he experienced in the family. His preoccupation with his mother's poor cooking, and her concern with his poor eating, were concrete, ongoing reflections of the difficulties between them. His "Mother Floyd" dream was a symbolic reflection of his perception of his mother as having forced him to poison himself with marijuana as a substitute for emotional nourishment.

The sense of inadequacy he developed from his early experiences left him ill-prepared to compete with his older brother, let alone to meet his mother's and father's expectations of him. Instead, he identified with his father's conflicts and anxieties around achievement and retreated into a private "fogged out" world.

Mrs. H's confused picture of Tim's early life, her need to insist he was her favorite despite the lack of evidence to support this, suggested how troubled she was by, and how much she wanted to deny, what actually happened.

Both Mr. and Mrs. H insisted that Tim was smarter than Dennis and that Tim received less from them in the way of attention and involvement only because, in contrast to Dennis, he asked for little. Persuading themselves that Tim had greater intellectual endowment than Dennis (the psychological tests confirmed that they were wrong in this assessment) permitted them to feel justified in their expectations of him and to blame him for failing to live up to them. In the same vein, seeing him as having asked for little permitted them to avoid having to see that his bitterness and discouragement at having received so little from them had led him to stop asking for anything.

Dave M

Dave M was only 17 but for the past two years much or most of his life had revolved around buying, selling, growing, and smoking marijuana. A tall, handsome young man with a pallid complexion and curly, uncombed, shoulder-length hair, he was invariably dressed in torn, dirty jeans and T-shirt. Dave's appearance was almost as irritating to his parents as was his constant use of marijuana. They also quarrelled with him over his not going to school, his use and abuse of the family car, and his demands for money. He would say he needed money for the car for one purpose (for example, looking for a job or going to a school function) but would use the money to buy pot and the car to drive around with his friends while high.

Dave had had violent fights with his family, particularly with his mother. In addition to destroying things in the house, he was verbally abusive to his mother and had hit her on occasion. The police had been called twice by his mother during their fights and once by Dave when he feared he would hurt her (in fact he had not). He was never abusive nor destructive when stoned.

Fred, Dave's 15-year-old brother, was tall and nice-looking with long, light blond hair. He was somewhat similar in appearance to Dave, although not as handsome. His hair was not as long or curly, and he had a more alert expression, appearing less detached and removed than Dave. Fred had been in no difficulties with his family or his school. He had a close relationship with his mother but a strained relationship with his father, who saw Fred as coming between his wife and himself. Although Fred had done well in school, he was tense about his achievement and performance there. He was motivated not by any particular educational interest, but by the desire to be rich and the belief that education was necessary to reach that goal.

Fred saw Dave as impossibly tense and irritable when he was not smoking marijuana. He was not close to Dave; at times he thought he hated him and felt, like his mother, that it would be better if Dave were out of the house. He saw his parents, and his father in particular, as inconsistent in their treatment of Dave and as letting him have his way to avoid a fight. He saw his father as silly and childish in his need to be alone with his mother. He empathized with his mother and believed she was right about most disagreements that occurred in the family. He dealt with his parents differently than did Dave. Although he was open with them about most things, he did not tell them of his occasional use of marijuana. He said his parents were not hard on him because he was helpful around the house.

The M's were a middle class, suburban, Jewish family. Mr. M's work as a salesman for an electronics firm took him away from home several days a week. Mrs. M was concerned and ambitious about her career as a social worker and had recently been made a supervisor.

Mrs. M, an attractive, well-dressed woman in her mid-forties, had an intense, nervous quality, and talked almost compulsively. She saw Dave as always doing things to annoy or irritate her. She dreaded coming home from the agency where she worked; she hoped Dave would not be home when she got there. She said she hated him and that he made her feel miserable, but that unlike her husband, she was no longer guilty about anything concerning Dave. She saw her husband as resenting the children for taking too much of her time. She described herself and Fred as talkers, while saying that Dave and her husband were usually silent.

In the detached, intellectual, yet tense way that was characteristic of her, Mrs. M was objective about her contribution to Dave's difficulties from his earliest years. Dave had been a special baby. The M's had wanted a boy and he was born on New Year's Day. He was handsome, friendly, bright, and responsible, much more so than Fred who as a small child was fat, clumsy, and not as smart. Dave was inventive in his play and used his toys in imaginative ways. Mrs. M recalled friction between them since she wished him to do things in the prescribed way. He was proud of his accomplishments. At the age of four he made his own bed, but she reacted critically because he had not made it as she liked it to be made. Somewhere between the ages of 5 and 12, he became detached and was no longer excited by his triumphs nor bothered by his failures. His view of his mother's behavior and its effect on him were suggested by recurrent dreams in his childhood of the wicked witch from the Wizard of Oz.

Mrs. M believed she was like her father was with his children in the way she never gave Dave a chance to talk. Now Dave retaliated by expressing an opinion and saying he did not wish to hear what she thought. If Mrs. M was like her father, a strong, domineering person whom she clearly admired more than she did her husband, she was like her mother in having a favorite child. She had always felt that she was given less and that more was expected from her by her mother in comparison to her younger sister who was the mother's favorite.

Mr. M, a tall, stocky, nice-looking, well dressed man of 47, spoke with feeling, at times laughing and at times sorrowful.

He felt he had failed as a father. He was uninvolved with the children in a way that reminded him of his own father's lack of involvement with him and with his sister. Mr. M was impatient and irritable with both his children. He saw Dave as someone who could not accept a "no" answer and he alternately felt fury and pity toward him. Mr. M complained that his wife took Fred's side in any arguments he had with Fred; he felt he and Fred got along better when they were alone.

Early in their marriage Mr. M had problems with his wife's father, whom he perceived as attempting to dominate their lives. When the children were young, the family moved to California, where Mr. M had been given a managerial position. He was happy there but when Dave was 12 and Fred 10 the family came back east because Mrs. M was so discontented at being away from her parents.

Marriage deflated him because his wife made her father, and later Fred, more important than him. He believed he played "second fiddle" to Fred in the same way he had to his older sister who was the apple of his mother's eye. His mother dominated and overprotected him, leaving him with "hangups" about his children's cleanliness and eating habits. He identified with the hero in the novel Portnoy's Complaint. He described himself as fat and clumsy while growing up until he lost weight in the service. His service experience was one of the few periods in his life when he felt important.

The M's presented Dave as the source of their frustrations. As the interviews went on, however, it was clear that difficulties in their marriage were masked by their mutual concern over Dave. Each at this point had gravitated toward a life with minimal emotional involvement with the other. Since being made a supervisory social worker, Mrs. M had become absorbed in her career, acknowledging she might be using it to withdraw from her husband. Mr. M was removed from his wife and enjoyed the travel on his job that took him away from home. He had fantasies that Dave and Fred would end up as derelicts, which related to his own fantasies of winding up as an emotional derelict.

Mr. M identified with and cared for Dave and defended him when he felt his wife was unfair to him. Dave was relatively indifferent to his father's solicitousness, except insofar as he could take advantage of it. He said he had few recollections of his father when he was little. He described as pleasant an early memory in which he did something that irritated his father who tried to hit him but struck the wall instead when Dave ducked. This recollection suggested an early pleasure in being provocative, perhaps as a way of getting attention that was otherwise unavailable to him.

Dave's provocativeness had a long history. He had learned to drive by himself at 13 by sneaking out and practicing with the car after the family was asleep. By the time he was discovered he already knew how to drive. Fights with his parents over his use of the car, however, had become constant. Dave would say he was using it to go to school and would use it to go away for the day. His mother would then deny him use of it for weeks or months. Or she would take away his right to use the car because he annoyed her in some other way. Mrs. M was generally inconsistent in her treatment of Dave and provocative in the arbitrary ways she would punish him. The provocations and retaliations between them went back and forth repeatedly.

Over the past year marijuana had been part of their struggle. Dave attempted to grow marijuana plants secretly in the basement of his house. After his mother discovered them and he agreed to throw them out, he tried to hide them elsewhere in the house. During the period where they were arguing over the plants, he used money that she had given him to attend a school party to buy marijuana instead.

Dave's school behavior paralleled his life at home. He was bright and did well in school until high school. At this point the authority of the teachers and the demands of school both became intolerable in ways that he connected with the difficulties he had with his parents. At the end of his junior year he dropped out of school and some months later he moved out of the house.

Dave's friends were primarily the young men from whom he bought, to whom he sold, and with whom he smoked marijuana. He had one brief homosexual relationship with a teacher in high school and although most of his sexual desires and fantasies were about women he said he was at times attracted to young men his own age. He had had casual sexual relationships with women but his only sustained relationship with a woman was with someone he was not sexually involved with and who was herself involved with someone else.

Although Dave, like most of the young drug abusers, claimed he wished to be out of school and working so he would have money, in practice he found it difficult to sustain interest even in jobs that attracted him. After quitting school, Dave worked when he had to as a cab driver, a job he said he liked because he could do it while stoned and could quit when he felt like it.

His attitude toward marijuana varied. At times he said he wanted it, enjoyed it, and had no conflict about its use. At other times he said he was wasting away his life being stoned. He said marijuana took away his ambition and drive and made him unable to express himself. He felt he needed marijuana, however, to relax and particularly to sleep.

Dave justified doing nothing with his life because of his doomsday predictions that either pollution or war would cause the end of everything. At the same time, he felt destined for some special fate. He used all sorts of coincidences as evidence of this: he would meet a person he was thinking of or someone he was about to call would call him. Although he felt that he was nothing in his family, he felt quite special in his idea of his unique telepathic powers. In one incident he was trying to buy a pen in a small town to change the date on his birth certificate so that he could get into a bar. He was approached by several people who asked if he had discovered Jesus, that is, been "reborn." He saw the episode as illustrative of the special meaning that surrounded his life.

Dave was hurt at feeling excluded from the family and by his awareness that his mother had wanted him out of the house. When he did move out he remained troubled by his mother's continuing distaste and contempt for him. He became teary-eyed when he said he did not know or care if his mother favored Fred.

Fred, like his mother and father, believed that the tension in the family eased once Dave moved out. Fred had not only avoided patterning himself after Dave but had a negative identification with him. His observation of the disastrous consequences of Dave's involvement with marijuana, particularly how it contributed to destroying Dave's relationship with their mother, had played a role in his general distaste for drugs; only on rare occasions would he smoke a marijuana cigarette.

Without Dave to deal with, Fred became aware that his biggest weakness was that he was talked into things too readily, putting other people's interests ahead of his own. He wanted to be liked and to please people and felt guilty if he did not succeed in doing this. These features of his personality were in striking contrast to Dave, who always put his own needs first and who had a temper tantrum if he did not get his own way. At the same time, Fred had developed those traits that permitted him to get along with a difficult, rigid, inconsistent mother.

In the case of the M's, their hopes and expectations seemed to have focused on Dave. Mrs. M's rigidity with regard to Dave contributed to his disappointing her and to his sense that it was futile to try to please her. Fred benefitted from not having been the original favorite and from the lower expectations that went with his position.

Neither of Dave's parents wanted the kind of tense family tie that was created by their involvement with Dave's problems. They argued constantly over Dave with Fred siding with his mother in opposing any leniency shown by the father. The M's relationship as a family clearly improved when Dave left home. Dave's situation, if anything, worsened. He was depressed, was smoking heavily, taking LSD occasionally, and focusing his life around buying, selling, and smoking marijuana.

Dave was never interested in therapy but during this period he would call to come in when he was particularly disturbed. One time a "bad acid trip" led him to do so. While in line at a Grateful Dead Concert, he thought that he heard a voice say "take a step backward" and that turned out to be the title of one of their songs. He also related the word "depression" in another song to himself. The spotlight seemed to be on him, people seemed to be looking at him, and he felt intensely out of control. At this point in Dave's life it indeed appeared that he had taken a step backwards.

When seen two years after this incident, Dave still needed and wanted approval from his mother. Although he expressed only pain and anger in talking of her, his need for her remained great. He became tearful when discussing his sense of her not wanting him to be part of the family. In her interviews, Mrs. M was direct and unemotional in saying she preferred to have as little to do with Dave as possible.

Marijuana was no longer an issue between Dave and his mother since he did not smoke it on his infrequent visits home. But the drug seemed to have become a fixed and essential part of Dave's life. Marijuana served to sustain his grandiose fantasies, to ease the pain and hurt he felt with his family, and to curb the rage he felt toward life because of his frustration.

Eddie J

Eddie, a six-foot tall, gangly-looking 14-year-old, came to most of his sessions dressed in blue jeans, T-shirt, boots, sunglasses, and a bandana around his head. He was often sullen and uncommunicative; at other times he was engaging and humorous and appeared to enjoy the interviews. On one occasion he came to a session with a girl's initials crudely carved into his forearm. This was consistent with other behavior he often exhibited during the interviews, such as scratching and digging at his skin with a paper clip and burning holes into his jeans with a cigarette lighter.

Eddie had been drinking alcohol since he was 10 years old and smoking marijuana since the age of 12. His usual pattern was to smoke marijuana in the morning before school and to continue smoking throughout the day and evening. Both during the day and at night he also drank beer and sometimes hard liquor. When angry or upset, especially at his parents, he often smoked and drank himself into a stupor. Once his parents had to carry him into the house after he passed out in the parking lot of their apartment building.

Eddie was referred to the study by a juvenile probation officer who met Eddie after his parents had filed a court petition in an attempt to curtail what they perceived as Eddie's uncontrollable behavior. Eddie was in constant trouble at school for truancy, stealing, fighting, coming to class high on marijuana, being verbally abusive and physically threatening to both teachers and administrators, and refusing to participate in classroom activities, to take tests, or to hand in homework assignments. When he was first seen, he was failing most of his courses and had already been suspended several times from school.

During the course of his interviews, the court removed Eddie from his home and placed him in a juvenile detention center and later in a series of group homes for disturbed youngsters. After running away from all these facilities, Eddie was sent to a residential treatment center for an eighteen-month period.

Eddie's 16-year-old sister, Deborah, was a bright, attractive, and popular young woman who had maintained a straight "A" average throughout school. Although she was clearly aware of a wide range of family problems, most of which she attributed to Eddie, she put considerable distance between herself and her family through her intense involvement in schoolwork and her numerous extracurricular activities.

Deborah had a steady relationship with a young man with whom she spent a great deal of time. She saw herself as preparing for a professional career and, like her boyfriend and most of her other friends, she planned to go to college immediately after high school. Over a period of several years she had developed a particularly close relationship with her maternal aunt, who lived next door, and spent several afternoons or evenings each week at her aunt's house.

While saying that she loved Eddie because he was her brother, Deborah was intensely angry at him for "messing everything up" in the family. She resented her parents' preoccupation with Eddie's problems and felt they had paid more attention to his failing grades than to her A's. She saw his heavy use of marijuana and alcohol as another of the "stupid things" he was always doing because he did not care about everything. While explaining her reluctance to become involved with drugs in terms of her concern that this would adversely affect her future, she described Eddie as feeling he had no future and therefore had nothing to lose.

Mr. and Mrs. J, an attractive-looking couple in their early 40's, lived in a lower middle and working class neighborhood. The J's, who came from an Irish Catholic, working class background, both held nonprofessional positions. Unlike her husband who felt he was a failure because he was a mechanic, Mrs. J was proud of her work during the past few years in a responsible and skilled clerical position in a business firm. The J's had begun dating while in high school and shortly after graduating, Mrs. J had become pregnant with Deborah. Rather than having an abortion, they told their parents and got married. Mrs. J's parents did not consider Mr. J a suitable husband for their daughter, however. Although Mrs. J said she was aware that Mr. J drank quite heavily, she had not worried about this since it did not seem to cause any problems. She recalled that while they were dating they got along well and never had any fights or arguments.

She felt their relationship had changed rather quickly for the worse after they were married and had continued to deteriorate during the period in which Deborah, Eddie, and a third child, Jenna, were born. Mrs. J remembered her husband as going out drinking frequently at night with his friends and never taking any responsibility for the care of the children. She was resentful about being stuck at home but rarely shared her feelings with Mr. J or communicated her concern.

Mrs. J related her inability to share her frustration and anger directly with her husband to a lifelong problem in expressing her feelings that she attributed to her upbringing. She recalled how her mother could not tolerate expressions of anger and would force her to go to her room if she started to get mad. There, alone and in absolute frustration, she would have temper tantrums. While feeling helpless to change the situation, Mrs. J recognized how much her emotional inhibition had affected her relationship with her husband.

For the last ten years, the J's marriage had been a battleground for recurrent fights over money, Mrs. J's relationship with her family, and Mr. J's jealousy over what he felt was his wife's attentiveness to the children's needs rather than his own. These problems were further complicated by Mrs. J's frequent hospitalizations for a variety of medical problems, including a severe back ailment. Mrs. J described these separations as resulting in further emotional distance from her husband.

She described Mr. J as drinking more and more in recent years, and becoming increasingly critical of her, constantly telling her that she was clumsy, nagging, stupid, and sexually unresponsive. Since she had gone back to work his criticism had become more intense and included threats to leave.

Any pleasurable experiences which Mrs. J spoke about in her interviews had almost exclusively to do with Deborah. She described her oldest daughter as a remarkably gifted child who, when she was only two years old, was able to speak well and figure out little puzzles. Mrs. J was so pleased with Deborah's precocious behavior that she read a great deal to her and gave her more difficult puzzles to increase her abilities. When Deborah was in kindergarten, she was able to write little poems which delighted Mrs. J.

In contrast, Mrs. J remembered Eddie as very slow in developing and learning. She described him as having difficulties making friends and frequently complaining, as a very young child, that other children were ignoring him. She recounted how as a youngster Eddie often made up stories about imaginary exploits in an effort to impress people and gain friends. He used to brag, for example, about make-believe criminal activities and about the police coming to his house to handcuff and arrest him.

Mrs. J noted that as a child Eddie became very upset if he suspected he was being "crossed." He would become quite angry, for instance, if he did not receive a particular Christmas present he had expected.

Mrs. J described her relationship with Eddie in overwhelmingly guilt-ridden terms. She felt guilty about not having paid enough attention to him, especially when he was younger and she was in and out of the hospital. She blamed herself for his academic problems because she was not more involved in helping him with his early school difficulties. She was particularly troubled that she had not followed the recommendations for counseling and special educational instruction which came from an early diagnostic evaluation indicating that Eddie had a learning disorder, a slight hearing impairment, and emotional problems. She felt that had she "stuck up" for Eddie more when he was criticized by his father, he would not have had lost so much of his self-confidence. Finally, Mrs. J felt she neglected Eddie and left him too much on his own by going to work when he was 12.

Mrs. J also felt that her marital difficulties were particularly injurious to Eddie. She said that Mr. J had always accused her of creating unnecessary financial pressures by taking Eddie to the hospital every time he bumped or scratched himself. As a result, once when Eddie hurt his finger she did not take him to a doctor, allowing the injury to heal by itself. She regretted that Eddie now has a permanently crooked finger.

The painful guilt Mrs. J felt around such incidents prevented her from disciplining Eddie or helping him learn appropriate social behavior. Mr. J on the other hand, felt his wife's "leniency" with Eddie made it necessary for him to assume the entire burden of Eddie's discipline, and he was resentful about being forced to assume this role.

Mr. J's resentment toward his wife was deeply rooted, going back to the circumstances surrounding their marriage. He saw her as having been unwilling to stand up to her parents, who opposed her marrying him on the grounds that he was a mechanic rather than the doctor or lawyer they had wanted for their daughter. He had wanted to elope while they were still in school, and interpreted her refusal to go along as an indication that she put her parents' desires above his.

Throughout the marriage, Mr. J had resented the fact that he was "forced" to attend Sunday dinners at his wife's parents' home where he felt he was treated like hired help. He also felt Mrs. J had pressured him into staying with his mechanic's job, which he felt demeaned him, instead of starting his own automobile parts shop as he had wanted. In addition, Mr. J was bitter over the fact that, although he had always provided materially for his family, no one appreciated his sacrifices. He described himself as the "pack mule" of the family who worked himself "silly" at a job he hated for a "bunch of ingrates."

During the initial interviews, Mr. J spoke of Eddie with barely controlled rage. He insisted that he had always treated Eddie and Deborah exactly alike, allowing each considerable latitude concerning such things as hours and the friends they kept. The fact that Deborah was highly responsible in these areas while Eddie constantly abused his freedom by coming home drunk and stoned at all hours of the night proved to Mr. J that Eddie simply brought his problems on himself. Mr. J's anger at his son made him fly off the handle at the slightest provocation and in recent years he was given to violent verbal and physical outbursts about Eddie's behavior. Although acknowledging that he had always felt uncomfortable around Eddie and had spent almost no time playing with him or teaching him things during his childhood, Mr. J continually blamed Eddie, rather than himself, for all of Eddie's problems.

During the course of the interviews, Mr. and Mrs. J separated for a period which coincided roughly with Eddie's stay at the residential treatment center. During their separation Mr. J joined Alcoholics Anonymous in order to get help for his drinking problem which he recognized had worsened considerably over the years. As a result of his experiences in AA, he began to view his role in the family with greater honesty.

Most significantly, Mr. J came to see that underlying his behavior toward both his wife and Eddie was a deep sense of his own inadequacy. He realized that he had used them as "whipping posts" because of his own frustration and disappointment over what he had failed to achieve in life. Whereas Deborah's academic and social success made Mr. J feel more adequate about himself, he began to recognize that he had for many years "shut out" Eddie because so many of his problems -- his learning difficulties, his lack of friends, his insecurity and sense of inferiority -- reminded Mr. J of his own shortcomings. He likened his relationship with Eddie to that he had had with his own father, and saw Eddie's recent behavior as a reflection of his own deeply troubled adolescence, which had included a stay at the very same juvenile institution to which Eddie had been sent.

Eddie's version of his childhood and his place within the family was consistent with his parents' picture of him. He suspected for a long time before his father came to see it that Mr. J's continual criticism of him was a reflection of self-dissatisfaction. His awareness did not ease the pain of his numerous memories of his father belittling him in front of other people, calling him stupid and dumb, or insisting that Eddie could do something and then, when he failed, lashing out at his incompetence.

Eddie was considerably less in touch with his feelings toward his mother, although his descriptions of several incidents during his childhood indicated an intense fear of her abandoning him. He recalled, for instance, that his father had frequently beaten him when his mother was in the hospital, and attributed this to what he imagined was his father's worry that his wife would die. One of his clearest childhood memories was of his mother taking him and his sisters for a drive in the car, following a particularly upsetting fight she had had with Eddie's father. He remembered being terrified that she was going to get back at his father by dropping off the children in a deserted, isolated spot in the country. Eddie was frequently preoccupied with fantasies of suffocating, drowning, or starving, and having no one come to his aid.

The pain and anguish he felt at not having been given to by his parents was most often concealed behind an angry, belligerent, and defensively independent stance. He put considerable effort into presenting himself as a "tough guy" who would beat up anyone who tried to push him around, and took pains to distinguish himself from what he referred to as "goody-goody wimps," "fairies," or "faggots."

His anger at his family came through in his frequent references to the things they did not do for him or give him and he harbored deep-seated grudges around the Christmas or birthday presents his mother had failed to provide. Eddie dealt with his anger toward his parents by spending most of his time avoiding them, staying out late and getting stoned in order to calm down. Since he was 12, Eddie said, he had felt life was pointless and not worth living. Although he admitted to having frequent thoughts of suicide, dating back to the time he was in kindergarten, most of the time he reacted to the meaninglessness of his life by getting drunk and high and "partying."

The link between Eddie's anger at his family, his emotional isolation from them, and his own self-destructiveness was reflected in a dream he described. He approached his apartment building, saw that it had been totally destroyed, and discovered that his entire family had been killed. A stranger came up to him and told him the United States was at war with Russia and that the Russians had just dropped a nuclear bomb. Refusing the stranger's advice to take cover, he threw himself into the fight with the Russians, feeling that one way or another he too was going to be killed.

The only emotion Eddie related to the dream was surprise about the nuclear war. He claimed to feel no sorrow or remorse about the death of the members of his family. He linked this dream to a fantasy he often had of escaping from the residential treatment center, going home, shooting everyone in his family, and then dying himself in a gun battle with police.

The relation between Eddie's heavy use of marijuana and his angry separation from his family was vividly portrayed in another dream. He was leaving a party at which he had gotten very high on marijuana. As he got into the car and began to drive off he noticed his mother and grandmother in the back seat. He suddenly lost control of the car and it smashed into a telephone pole, injuring Eddie and killing the passengers.

Eddie had this dream in the course of making several attempts to persuade his mother to help him gain an early release from the residential treatment center. During the interview in which he reported the dream, he indicated that if his mother did not get him out early, it would be a message that she did not want him. He said that he had already gotten the same message from his father and now was waiting to see where his mother stood.

Talking about the dream, Eddie related his mother's death in the car accident, which resulted from his being high, to his feeling that he was, in effect, killing her through the worry caused by his marijuana smoking. He appeared conflicted about this insight, alternating between self-righteous anger at his mother for not coming through for him and concern over his destructive behavior.

Of all Eddie's family relationships, he appeared to be least conflicted with Deborah. Although indicating considerable emotional distance from her, Eddie frequently spoke of Deborah in a highly idealized manner, reflecting his parents' view of her as the pride of the family. In one of Eddie's fantasies of the future he is a bum, looking to his highly successful older sister for assistance. Since Eddie spent most of his time with older youths, joining them in drinking and smoking marijuana, he and Deborah occasionally interacted within the same circle of acquaintances. The gulf between their behavior and values, however, paralleled the contrast in Eddie's fantasy of the bum being rescued by the successful professional woman. Although at times Deborah expressed concern for Eddie, for the most part she was distant toward him.

Although Deborah's behavior appeared to be that of a model child, she indicated in her interviews that behind her successful, popular outward appearance she was deeply troubled. She complained of recurrent bouts of depression, most commonly set off by fights between Eddie and her parents, and spoke of becoming very upset whenever anyone raised a voice to her because of all the yelling that had gone on within her family. Mrs. J confirmed Deborah's fears in this regard, noting that Deborah had been unable to get a part-time job because she was frightened that someone would yell at her.

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When depressed or upset, Deborah typically turned to her aunt, or threw herself even more into her studies, school activities, and her relationships with friends. At one point during her interviews, Deborah had a serious fight with her boyfriend which resulted in a temporary breakup. Without this relationship, she experienced her family's problems more intensely and for a brief time, experimented with alcohol and marijuana. During this period she also had fantasies of killing herself and imagined how hurt and guilty her boyfriend would be about her death. She quickly decided that her continued use of drugs would have serious negative consequences in terms of the things she wanted for herself, discontinued this behavior, and shortly thereafter reunited with her boyfriend.

The sharp difference between Deborah's and Eddie's attitudes toward marijuana was in large measure a function of the difference between them in their views of their futures. Deborah's place in the family had allowed her from a very early age to develop a sense of herself as competent and valued and to see in herself a potential for financial and social success. Although her mother's strong identification with her had many positive features, it also resulted in Deborah's developing many of her mother's fears and inhibitions. In addition, her father's drinking, and the ongoing struggles between her parents had had disruptive and troubling consequences. Her thoughts of suicide in response to loss indicated problems with attachment that appeared to go back to the rather tenuous security she experienced in the family. Deborah, however, had learned to cope with these problems by concentrating on activities and relationships which brought her respect and gratification, and her conflicts appeared to have been contained within an overall successful adaptation built on high achievement aspirations.

Mr. and Mrs. J's limitations, which Deborah experienced, were considerably heightened for Eddie due to his father's negative identification with him and subsequent retreat, and his mother's total inability to provide the nurturance, support, and understanding which Eddie needed. The motivation which Deborah provided for her mother's continued investment in her was lacking altogether with Eddie. Instead of pleasure and pride, Eddie's behavior had always evoked disappointment in his mother, causing her, as well as her husband, to withdraw from Eddie as a way of avoiding further pain. Much of Mrs. J's disappointment with Eddie appeared to be a reflection of her feelings toward her husband whose behavior and personality paralleled Eddie's in so many ways.

Bobby G

"Burnt out Bobby," a nickname given this young man by his classmates because of his heavy use of marijuana, was 16 when he was first seen. He was thin with a sallow complexion, and long hair. He hated his appearance because of his hair, which he regarded as "kinky and gross," but by keeping it down to his shoulders he maximized its effect. He listed "great hair," along with money and happiness, as the three things he would wish for. He had been smoking marijuana for three years, heavily for the last two. He frequently came home stoned, which his older sister was aware of but which his parents managed not to notice.

Their concerns with him centered on his school difficulties, difficulties he had had from the earliest grades and which had intensified in recent years. He and his family also fought over his sloppy appearance, his messy room, and his failure to carry out his share of the responsibilities at home. He handled the friction by staying out at night and occasionally running away from home. He also saw his use of marijuana as helping him to deal with the tensions at home and said he smoked it less when he was away.

Bobby's sister Diane, two years older than he, was an attractive young woman who usually dressed in blue denims. She had long red hair which she disliked and described as frizzy. She spoke of her resentment of Bobby, saying it was probably immature of her but she felt her parents favored him and catered to him. He was not expected to take his share of the responsibilities in the house. She said her parents treated Bobby as if he were a "time bomb" ready to explode and sometimes he did. She made clear, as did Bobby, that she and Bobby got along well when their parents were not around.

Diane was friends with and confided in her mother. She wanted to please both her parents and was conscious of having disappointed them when she fell behind in her school work and did not graduate from high school with her class. She finished a term late and was working while waiting to start college.

She said of her father that he tended to contradict her and was critical of what she said and how she looked. He was similarly critical, Diane felt, with Bobby and with their 10-year-old sister, Susan. She felt he loved them but preferred to be alone with her mother.

The G's were a middle class family living in the suburbs. Mr. G, although trained as an accountant, worked for the fire department. He intended to go into business as an accountant after he had completed enough time with the fire department to be eligible for a pension. His wife had not worked until the past few years when she took a job in a nursery school. Mr. B was Jewish and his wife was Catholic.

Although Mr. and Mrs. G got along reasonably well, this was not true early in their marriage, particularly in the period after Bobby's birth. Mr. G had agreed to have the children raised in the Catholic Church, but when Bobby was born Mr. G changed his mind. The dispute became so serious that Mrs. G returned to live with her mother and was there for two years before reconciling with her husband. They agreed that the child would be raised as a Catholic, but his name was changed from Christopher to Bobby.

Mr. G said he had always loved his wife, pointing out that he never drank after work with other firemen and did not fool around with other women. He did not enjoy being with his children, saw them as too demanding, and was pleased when they were out of the house. He felt ashamed that he did not feel closer to them. He described himself as angry, irritable, and upset when the family was together.

Mr. G complained that Bobby was dirty, messy, and poorly groomed; that he borrowed his tools and never returned them; and that he ate compulsively, raiding the refrigerator and leaving nothing for anyone else. He saw nothing good about Bobby, expressed a good deal of anger and contempt for him, and tried to avoid talking to him because he felt he would only be critical. Despite this, he said he felt closer to Bobby than to his daughters, at times enjoyed his company, and would miss him if he left home.

Mr. G. was irritable with the whole family because they were not frugal. He did not like the children's taking long showers and frequently checked their rooms to make sure they had turned the thermostats down. He said his wife often told him he was too hard on everyone and too irritable.

Mr. G's attitudes toward his children were shaped by his own childhood. His father had been a salesman, was away from home a lot, and was not interested in his children. Mr. G saw him as a bore who said negative and depressing things. His mother had worked as a bookkeeper when he was a child and he was cared for by an older woman who was mean to him and beat him all the time. He begged his mother not to leave him with this woman, but she did not believe what he said about her. He said his mother was a good person, but that he did not like to be around her because she talked compulsively and made him nervous. His parents also fought with each other all the time.

Despite his upbringing, Mr. G had been ambitious as a youngster. Unlike Bobby, he said, he had always worked from the time he was 13, either selling papers or doing odd jobs. He was also an excellent athlete on a state championship basketball team. He disappointed his family, however, by not becoming a doctor or lawyer and by marrying someone who was not Jewish.

When he met his wife he hid his being Jewish for several years because he feared she would reject him. He said her father seemed to be "a Nazi type" in looks and manner. He had not wished to marry when they did, but his wife was pregnant with their first daughter. He was bitter that he had to go through a Catholic religious ceremony and had to agree to have his children raised as Catholics. He was particularly bitter towards his mother-in-law because of the two years his wife had lived with her after Bobby was born.

Mrs. G saw Bobby as a difficult, cranky, demanding child in contrast to his older and younger sisters. She thought her tension and depression due to her separation from her husband when Bobby was an infant may have contributed to his behavior and to her perception of him. When he was a year old she had to tie a rope around him and tie him to a tree when they went to the park because he always ran around and got into trouble. All her children were toilet trained by the age of two, but Bobby had wet his bed frequently until he was 10.

Mrs. G spoke of Bobby as not doing his chores around the house and of "buttering" her up so she would do them for him. She said she was sympathetic and wanted to believe his stories and excuses, but that her daughters were resentful that Bobby got away with so much. Yet she was aware that her annoyance with his school performance was responsible for Bobby's feeling that he could not live at home. She fought with Bobby because he would not take a shower, get a haircut, or clean his room. She also objected to his dressing in torn clothes and to his not going to school, but unlike her husband, she expressed some sympathy and compassion for him.

Mrs. G said she loved her husband, but described him as a little babyish and possessive in his attitude toward her relationship with her parents and with the children. She was aware of Mr. G's resentment over her closeness to her parents and his feeling that she put them and the children ahead of him.

Mrs. G and her husband had gone together for six years, but she was not sure she would have married him if she had not become pregnant. She still felt ashamed and bad for her parents at having to get married that way. She stated that she would not have married him even though she was pregnant had he not agreed to bring the children up as Catholics. To avoid his resentment, Mrs. G had always gone to church at 7 o'clock on Sunday mornings in order not to interfere with his plans for the day.

Although often reluctant to come for his interviews, Bobby was friendly and fairly open when he came. He had a sense of humor reflected in his bending down close to the microphone after one of his sessions had been tape recorded and saying goodbye to the interviewer by name.

Bobby said he had all sorts of material things, such as a stereo and a motorbike, but that he would trade them all if he could be happy with his family. He said his parents broke him down with their criticisms and that his father saw him as a "long-haired pot-smoking freak." He had heard his father mutter a profanity at him after Bobby had slammed the door following an argument with his parents.

After one particularly unpleasant fight in which Mr. and Mrs. G had screamed at Bobby about his poor performance in school, he ran away for several weeks. A dream he had when he returned in which his parents were waiting for him with knives, ran after him, and threw him out the window, expressed his feelings about the situation. He related the dream to his feeling "cut up" and forced to leave by his parents' attacks.

Bobby felt his father was more involved with him than with his sisters only because he carried the family name. Although he reassured himself that his father would stand in front of him if someone were going to shoot him, he suspected that if he and another boy were drowning, and the other boy had short hair, his father would save the other boy.

He saw his mother as fair in her criticisms of him and believed she said what she did for his own good. He said he hid his use of marijuana from her because he felt she would hold it against him and because he did not wish to hurt or worry her.

Bobby saw himself as someone who blocked out things that bothered him. He said he could not deal effectively with situations in which people got angry at him. He gave as an example an instance in which he stood up a girl he was seeing without calling her because he had something else he wanted to do and felt she would be mad if he told her that. Once after he had changed schools and was not yet in difficulty at the new school, some kids at school asked him for a dollar to buy beer. He did not want to go along with them, but did because he did not want to be disliked. They all drank the beer and got into trouble.

Bobby believed that special things, both good and bad, happened to him. He referred to a motorbike accident when he was 14 in which his scrotum had been torn off, but his mother had had the presence of mind to retrieve the scrotum and bring it to the hospital where it was sewn back on. He saw himself as finding or being given what he needed. If he wanted a quarter for a pinball machine, he might find one; if he wanted ice cream, the owner of the ice cream parlor might offer him some. He saw his being handy as the product of luck rather than skill.

His passivity and hope for magical and effortless transformation were reflected in dreams that involved his relationship with the interviewer. In the first dream a man with a mustache had burned the tail and backside of the family dog, Benny. He and his mother and sisters were shooting at the house of the man whom Bobby described as a "Mafia type." They went in to see him and magically he made the dog all right again.

In his associations to the dream, he began by saying that he knew it was not his father in the dream even though his father had a mustache, since his father in reality loved Benny. When it was pointed out to him that he had felt the family had "been on his tail," he agreed he was representing himself as Benny and that the man with the mustache certainly was his father. He saw the interviewer as the Mafia man who was threatening the relationships in his family but who he hoped would do something magical to make Bobby better. He then talked about what he wanted from the interviewer, mentioning in this context his frequent thoughts about finding "a bottle with a genie in it."

Discussion of this dream seemed to stimulate the following dream: He was an outfielder playing professional baseball. A man in the stands gave him a special glove that enabled him to catch every ball. The ball by itself would just come into the glove. He became a star overnight. His magical wishes that the interviewer should transform him without the need for effort on his part were similar to his attitude that he would get his diploma without having to study or that he would like to be paid for his part-time job without working.

Diane was eager to come for the interviews and used them to discuss her difficulties with her family and with Bobby. She believed that her parents favored him because of their guilt over the circumstances of their marriage when he was born. It also had to do, she felt, with his being a boy. Diane felt that her father did not favor her, but that he did not put the pressure on her that he put on Bobby.

When she was 15, she smoked marijuana for a period of several months but then lost interest in it. She said she had friends who were good students, others who were not, some who were never involved in drugs,and one girl who was in an institution because of drug abuse. She had told her mother about her involvement with marijuana, but she had lied to her about Bobby, saying he did not use it.

She related a recent dream that affected her deeply and appeared to capture her adaptive difficulties in dealing with her family. She was being offered a job that she had actually had the previous summer in which she worked for a family, taking care of their two-year-old daughter. In the dream the family's house was haunted. The woman she was working for told her she would have to share a room with the child. Diane said she did not mind but she actually did. The woman then told her not to go upstairs because there was someone up there in a room that she was not supposed to see. Diane went up anyhow and saw a very pretty girl with a veil, staring out the window.

Diane spoke of having liked this job and said she was hoping to get it again the following summer. In actuality she had had a lovely room all to herself. The girl by the window reminded her of the central character of the movie "Sybil" who had many different personalities. The particular personality represented in the dream was the unkind and critical Sybil, sour about everything, and feeling that nothing ever turned out right. Diane wondered if Sybil could be a representation of the different sides of her own personality. She said she seldom showed the side that might be critical, sour, or pessimistic. She described herself as someone who seemed pleasant and went along with people, but hid what she felt when what she felt was unpleasant.

She related the two-year-old child in the dream to Bobby, whom she felt her mother treated as a baby. After she was told she would share her room with the little child, the girl with the sour disposition entered the dream. Diane had been speaking in her interviews of the ways in which Bobby spoiled her mood. She would be happily talking to her mother and if Bobby came in her mother got tense, waiting for the conversation to shift to Bobby which Bobby took for granted.

A year after Diane was first seen, she was in college and had become involved with a young man from her neighborhood who drank a lot and could not hold a job. He also treated her poorly, did not consider her needs, tried to make her jealous, and often stood her up without calling. In his self-centeredness he reminded her of Bobby. Her willingness to put up with his treatment seemed to derive from years of resigning herself to her father's indifference and playing "second fiddle" to Bobby with her mother.

Although the B's were satisfied with their present relationship both Bobby and Diane grew up feeling their parents might separate. Bobby considered that the tension he created might contribute to his parent's breakup. When Diane became sexually involved with her recent boyfriend whom her parents strongly disapproved of, it put a strain on her relationship with them and led to her having nightmares in which the whole family was destroyed. Both Bobby and Diane had the feeling that the family stability was sufficiently fragile that wrong actions on their part jeopardized everything.

Bobby's problems were exacerbated by the fact that his earliest attachment to his mother had been marred by the separation of his parents and his mother's depression. His mother's affection for Bobby was tinged by guilt over what happened, guilt that did not permit her to set proper limits and conditions on Bobby's behavior. His father's identification with Bobby led him to expectations that Bobby could not fulfill.

Marijuana helped Bobby deal with the tension and anger of his relations with his family and fostered the passivity and sense of magical transformation reflected in his dreams. Bobby's fantasies of grandiose success without effort, which were aided by his use of marijuana, were hard to influence as long as his parents' expectations of him were so unrealistic.

Chapter 5

Family Psychodynamics

Although all of the families who participated in this study were structurally intact, there were significant conflicts between the parents in virtually every family. Yet, except for a few families such as the H's in which the marriage appeared to have been bad from the beginning, most of the couples had had reasonably satisfying relationships prior to the births of their children. Without exception, parenthood appears to have strained the marital relationships by exacerbating problems that each parent brought to the marriage.

The problems in the interaction between parent and child usually appeared to go back into the early childhood of the drug abuser. In some cases, parents had resolved the original problems that troubled their marriage or interfered with their interaction with a particular child, but the youngster had suffered the consequences and in a sense made the parents continue to pay for old injuries.

Seeing the marijuana-abusing youngster during adolescence and not knowing the detailed history of the family, concern for this child could be said to have brought the family closer together, if only in a tense, troubled way. It is simplistic, however, to assume that the family's need for such a child was responsible for the marijuana abuse. Although Mrs. D, for example, encouraged her husband's concern over Clara as a way of tying him to her, neither of the M's wanted such a tie and the M family got along considerably better after Dave had left home. The ways in which parents reacted to their marijuana-abusing children were quite varied, with some aggravating the situation beyond what it otherwise would have been.

FAMILY PATTERNS

Clearly, no single family pattern was found to be responsible for some youngsters' becoming marijuana abusers while their siblings do not. Yet certain characteristic patterns did emerge and were repeated among the families.

In some of the larger families the parents continued to have children although they were less able to cope with each succeeding child. In one such Catholic family, the mother finally persuaded her doctor to ligate her fallopian tubes after her fourth child was born, although she had wanted such a procedure earlier. She saw her fourth child as excessively demanding from birth and dreamed of him repeatedly as a hungry rat. Typically in such families the husband needed a second job to support the family; this required him to work evenings, cut off his contact with the family, and left his wife feeling abandoned and overwhelmed at having to cope with the children by himself.

The A's reflected such a pattern although they only had three children and several families had four or five. Lisa was older when the family started to come apart. Although her shoplifting and sexual behavior reflected some of the impact of the family's difficulties, she graduated from high school, held a job, and eventually married the father of her child. Angela was more severely damaged, was acutely aware of what she had lost, and was on a course that seemed likely to destroy her life with drugs and alcohol. Her younger brother, who had spent virtually all his life in the period of family disruption and tension, was the most disturbed. He had retreated into a solitary, friendless life and was preoccupied with suicide and fears of bodily dissolution.

In another relatively simple family pattern observed, one of two children of the same sex was labelled good and the other bad. The division was made early in life, and both parents participated in it. The difference in the D's attitudes toward each of their two daughters was almost predictable. Mrs. D was pleased to be married; that she and her husband were looking forward to their first child is suggested by their description of Vanessa as a "wonderful, beautiful baby." By the time the D's were expecting their second child, they were quarreling over Mr. D's frequent absences on business. After Clara's birth Mrs. D recalled waiting up at night hoping he would return or at least call. She did not connect her description of Clara as a "poor sleeper" with her own anxiety or sleeplessness during this period. The family's longstanding ambivalence toward Clara is underlined by a story they frequently told of starting on a trip and remembering only in a cab on the way to the airport that they had forgotten one-year-old Clara at home.

Currently the difference in the parents' reaction to the misbehavior of their two daughters was revealed in the incident when Vanessa forged her mother's signature to a bad report card. Although they were not really upset at this behavior, they admitted they would have been quite furious had Clara done the same thing. Since neither Mr. nor Mrs. D wanted to recognize that Vanessa had problems, Vanessa was left with the strain of having to hide those she had.

The H's provide an illustration of a good child-bad child split occurring early in the lives of male siblings. The lack of nurturance which Tim, the marijuana-abusing sibling, perceived in his relationship with his mother originated almost immediately following his birth when she returned to work at the completion of a 2-year maternity leave begun at the birth of his older brother, Dennis. While neither Dennis or Tim had experienced real security or love in relation to either their mother or their alcoholic father, Dennis, as a result of the greater attention he received in infancy, was better equipped to defend against his feelings of insecurity by developing a take-charge, domineering role within the family. Playing the straight, responsible role earned Dennis respect and affirmation in the eyes of his parents which further motivated him to fulfill their expectations. Tim, on the other hand, perceived himself as lacking in any real capacity to meet his parents' expectations or to measure up to Dennis, and he withdrew into marijuana as a way of easing his sense of inadequacy.

Tim became an exceptionally heavy user of marijuana and in his frequent smoking binges reduced himself to a functionless state. As reflected in the dream in which "Mother Floyd" gave him a cup of poisoned tea, Tim connected his marijuana abuse directly to his lack of maternal nurturance.

The good child-bad child split takes on somewhat more complex dimensions in the cases involving opposite sex siblings. Both Mr. and Mrs. J, for example, defined Deborah as the good child who brought them nothing but pleasure and satisfaction while Eddie was regarded as the longstanding trouble-maker who had created nothing but difficulty for the entire family. In this case, Mr. J's identification with Eddie and the anxiety this engendered in him resulted in emotional distance between father and son which isolated Eddie from the family more and more as he grew older. In particular, the difficulty Eddie had in school and his angry anti-social behavior duplicated the patterns of Mr. J's own youth, and resonated with his own sense of being a failure. Unable directly to confront these issues in himself, he lashed out at Eddie in an attempt to create distance from him. Deborah did not arouse such identification in her father, both because of her sex and her much more successful adaptation, so her relationship with him was very different.

Mrs. J was also motivated away from Eddie because of the guilt she felt at her own inability to meet his special needs. In addition, the similarities between Eddie and his father appear to have caused Mrs. J to express with Eddie many of the long-standing negative feelings she had toward her husband. Deborah did not need nearly so much from either of her parents and was able to give a great deal to them, especially to her mother. The identification between Mrs. J and Deborah was a source of satisfaction to Mrs. J and resulted in Deborah's receiving her mother's support and affection from infancy. Although Deborah benefited from this identification, it also involved her developing her mother's inhibitions, emotional constriction, and frequent bouts of depression.

Starting life wanted and favored as Deborah did is no guarantee, however, against future difficulties. Dave, the M's marijuana-abusing older son, whose provocative behavior led the family to want him out of the home, had clearly begun life as the family favorite. By late adolescence he was fighting with his parents constantly over his not going to school, his use and abuse of the family car, and his demands for money.

Mr. and Mrs. M described Dave as having been a special child. He had looks, intelligence, and charm that they found lacking in his younger brother. Dave's imagination, intelligence, and inventiveness had clashed with his mother's need to have him do things in exactly the way she wanted. His mother related the incident where, instead of praising him for making his own bed at the age of four, she criticized him for not having done it in the manner she liked, with some realization of the destructive effect she had had on him. She suspected that she had some responsibility for his having detached himself from the pleasure of success and the pain of failure. Dave's recurrent childhood dream image of her as the wicked witch from the Wizard of Oz provides confirmation of her views.

Clearly Dave suffered from being the object of his mother's high expectations and rigid demands. His younger brother, Fred, the beneficiary of lesser expectations, was doing well in school and in his social relations, and had become his mother's confidante. Although the effort to get along with his mother had resulted in Fred's sometimes withholding feelings he felt would not please her, he was genuinely fond of her and expressed this in his behavior.

In several of the families, although the relationship between the parents was reasonably good at the time they were interviewed, there had been serious problems earlier in the marijuana-abusing child's life, problems which had ongoing effects on the youngster. The G's were one such family.

To see the G family during recent years, one would have to say that Bobby was favored by both his parents. They thought so, his sister thought so, and he thought so. But Bobby was the victim of the early separation of his parents, occasioned by their conflict over his being raised as a Catholic. That insecure period of his life left him less able than his older sister Diane to deal with school and with the conflicts of adolescence.

Mr. G's interest in and identification with Bobby resulted in his treating Bobby with anger when he failed to meet his father's expectations. Diane suffered from his indifference, but it was less painful than his contempt. Mrs. G's guilt over the early problems created for Bobby by her leaving her husband made it harder for her to set appropriate limits for his behavior. Although Bobby came first in his mother's priorities, she was tense, troubled, and angry with him; Diane's company she genuinely enjoyed.

Whether a marijuana-abusing youngster was seen as a problem child from the beginning or only became one with time, by adolescence and usually before drug abuse had become an issue, he or she had become the "bad" or "difficult" child in contrast to a nondrug-abusing sibling. The net result was that the abusers often seemed not to be a part of their families. The more integrated families would enjoy doing things together but were no more comfortable than the marijuana-abusing youngster in having him or her take part in their activities.

ROLE DIVISION

The marijuana abusers and their nondrug-abusing siblings appeared to have incorporated their parents' image of each of them and to express that image in their behavior. If the abuser resented the image, he or she lived up to it with the consolation that marijuana abuse made possible a measure of retaliation against the parents. In almost all of the families, one youngster defined himself or herself as the drug abuser and appropriated that role. Clara, for example, was proud that in the area of drugs she had done more and knew more than Vanessa.

Within many of the families, one youngster's becoming the drug abuser seemed to diminish the chances of the sibling's developing the same problem. Fred, Vanessa, and Deborah, for example, saw the disastrous consequences of Dave's, Clara's, and Eddie's involvement with drugs and its effect on their relationship with their parents. In a sense they formed a negative identification with their marijuana-abusing sibling.

The role division among the siblings tends to have wider ramifications than were reflected simply in the use or avoidance of drugs. In one family where the family's problems increased with each successive child, the eldest son was never in trouble, and, although depressed and unhappy, functioned well and was on his way to medical school. A second son, a football player, was enraged with his family and expressed it in violent behavior. The third and youngest son never fought with his parents, nor was he aware of any anger toward them. The parents discovered by accident that this youngest son had been heavily involved with marijuana for years without their having ever suspected it.

A dream of the second son at age 18 suggested the degree to which such varying ways of dealing with family frustration can become fixed. The dreamer's marijuana-abusing younger brother, neatly dressed, was going to a football game. The dreamer, sloppily dressed, tried to buy a Playboy magazine at a newsstand. The proprietor did not want to sell it to him unless he had proof that he was 21 years old.

In reality, this young man saw himself as clean-cut, well-dressed, and athletic, and had contempt for his sloppily dressed, marijuana-abusing younger brother who would never go to a football game. At the same time, he envied his brother's active social and sexual life. In relating the dream he was apologetic about his interest in Playboy, saying he did not buy it often and was always uncomfortable when asking for it at the newsstand.

Drugs, sex, and sloppiness were his brother's prerogatives; being clean-cut and athletic were his. His dream appeared to be an attempt to break down these roles. If his brother were only more clean-cut and athletic, he imagined that perhaps he could permit himself to have more of a sexual life.

Overt expressions of rage toward parents were usually the province of the marijuana abuser. In this family, however, the abuser was known as the "clam" of the family and was not, in fact, in touch with any anger toward his parents. Consistent with this, he kept his marijuana abuse a secret, and his general behavior toward his parents was not provocative.

Although sexual activity was also usually more frequent on the part of the marijuana-abusing child in the family, as it was in this case and with Clara in contrast to Vanessa, this was not always true. Angela A's nondrug-abusing sister, Lisa, centered her life on being attractive to young men, and her shoplifting primarily involved clothes that she felt contributed to her image of herself in this regard. While Angela had a boyfriend and had been sexually involved with him, her adaptation was far more that of a tomboy.

Regardless of its specific form the good child-bad child split within these families clearly came to represent a wedge driven between the marijuana abuser and his or her sibling. Although some of the siblings, like Vanessa D, had protective feelings toward the marijuana-abusing brother or sister, they tended to feel, as did Vanessa, that the parents were not strict enough and that the abuser was allowed to get away with too much. Since many of the parents, like the D's, were actually over-controlling in many respects, the siblings seemed to be expressing feelings of resentment toward the marijuana abuser and toward their parents for not being able to deal with the situation. Such resentment toward their brother or sister, in most cases, was direct and conscious; all of the siblings sided with their parents in their anger with the marijuana-abusing youngster and all of them resented the disruptive effect of the abuser on the family.

The rigid division of roles created between the marijuana-abusing adolescents and their nondrug-abusing siblings had harmful psychological consequences for both youngsters. Even the siblings who were favored paid a price for the favoritism. Angela A was acutely upset at her sister's constant anger toward her, anger which stemmed largely from their mother's partiality to Angela. Siblings like Vanessa, Fred, Deborah, and Dennis saw their favored positions as contingent upon their good behavior, and as a result, often felt compelled not to show their problems or even be aware of them. As a consequence the nondrug-abusing siblings as a group seemed more guarded and emotionally constricted than their less well-defended brothers and sisters.

In such families both the marijuana abuser and the nondrug-abusing sibling seemed more aware than the parents that the differences between them were not as sharp as they appeared. The marijuana abusers often saw their siblings as deceptive or hypocritical for misbehavior that they managed to keep from their parents' awareness. The nondrug-abusing siblings in almost every case experienced both guilt for their favored position and the strain of having to live up to an image they knew was not completely true.

In concluding this discussion of the families of the adolescent marijuana abusers, it should be noted that both the family patterns and sibling role divisions which were observed were seen as dynamic configurations rather than static characteristics of these families. In each of the families studied, numerous characteristics were identified which appeared to be related to adolescent marijuana abuse. The meaning of such relationships, however, was derived only through viewing the entire family from a psychodynamic perspective. Several of the youngsters, for example, had at least one parent who was alcoholic, a characteristic which has been shown to be significantly correlated with adolescent substance abuse (Brook et al. 1977, 1978; Kandel et al. 1978). As seen in the cases of Angela A, Eddie J, and Tim H, however, the nature of the relationship between the presence of an alcoholic parent and the youngster's heavy use of marijuana was understandable only with reference to the overall picture of the family relationships, patterns of interactions, role expectations, attachments and aversions among the various family members. That each of Angela's parents had a drinking problem was certainly less significant in understanding her marijuana abuse than was the recognition of her depression at the loss of the closeness she had once experienced with her family -- depression which she attempted to mask and repress through her marijuana-inspired light-heartedness. Importantly, Mr. A's problems with alcohol did not cause, but rather reflected, the difficulties he experienced in dealing with the intimacy and responsibility of family life and which led him in time to turn his attention outside the family. Mrs. A also turned to alcohol to console herself over the sense of loss she experienced in her relationship with her husband.

Similarly, for Eddie J it was much more his father's direct rejection of him than his father's alcoholism which was connected to Eddie's heavy marijuana use. Even for Tim H, who used marijuana at least partially as an attempt to escape from his father's drunkenness and abusiveness, other aspects of the family dynamics, and especially the lack of nurturance he experienced in his relationship with his mother, emerged as far more significant in understanding his marijuana abuse than did his father's alcoholism.

While it may be true that some youngsters learn from alcohol-abusing parents the practice of seeking relief from one's problems through drugs, such an observation is not a universal one, as was demonstrated by the nondrug-abusing sibling in each of the three families just mentioned. In fact, for these siblings, and particularly for Deborah J and Dennis H, there was a negative identification with the substance-abusing parent and sibling. In addition, in 12 of the 17 families studied, neither parent had a drinking problem, yet each family had a marijuana-abusing adolescent. Thus while certain static family characteristics may suggest explanatory linkages with adolescent marijuana abuse, the families seen in this study demonstrated that such linkages are truly meaningful only when viewed within the overall context of the family psychodynamics.

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Chapter 6

The Functions of Marijuana

For adolescents the heavy use and abuse of all drugs involves the significance of the act of taking the drug as well as the specific functions of a particular drug for the youngster. It is reasonable to assume that any adolescent behavior strongly disapproved of by parents, teachers, and community leaders will reflect certain "antiauthority" overtones; certainly this appeared true of the representative cases of marijuana abusers. At the same time, our research indicated that past emphasis on heavy marijuana use as part of a lifestyle choice involving role modeling and affiliation with proponents of alternative social values, attitudes, and mores is unidimensional and overly simplistic. These adolescents' involvement with drug-abusing peers waxed and waned in accordance with their changing need to smoke large amounts of marijuana. This need, while expressed in interaction with drug-abusing peers, related essentially to the psychodynamics of the youngsters' family relationships.

DEFIANCE AND PROVOCATION

With someone like Dave, who grew marijuana plants in his basement, and who fought constantly with his parents over his right to smoke as much marijuana as he pleased, the provocativeness is apparent. Marijuana for adolescents like Dave represented an assertion of their independence and their desire to be free from parental control. The ambivalent nature of this desire, however, is suggested by the fact that such provocative use of marijuana elicits parental reaction and intervention in ways that more covert use does not.

Some of the heaviest of the marijuana users such as Clara, Tim, and Bobby, managed to keep their usage from their parents' awareness for years despite coming home stoned nearly every day. Although the parents' need not to know is involved here as well, these youngsters used this need to their advantage, while others like Dave and Eddie were determined to force their marijuana abuse on their parents' consciousness. Clara, Tim, and Bobby were provocative or defiant in other ways, however, from refusing to do household chores to staying out at night without informing their parents.

The defiance which almost all of the adolescent marijuana abusers demonstrated in behavior toward their parents was also evident in their relationships with other authorities, in particular their teachers, principals, and school counselors. Since most of the youngsters were cutting class to smoke, and since their marijuana abuse was often related to an attempt to escape from the pressures of school, at times school authorities appeared to be more aware of such abuse and more in conflict with youngsters over it than were their parents. In almost every case, however, the marijuana-abusing adolescent's school behavior was a reflection of long-standing patterns of provocative interaction with adults that had developed in the family.

The attraction to the criminal aspects of drug abuse -- the illicit cops-and-robbers excitement seen among young marijuana abusers in the early 70's and still typically seen in young heroin abusers -- was not present to a significant degree in any of the marijuana-abusing youngsters in the present study. Although several in the group often had large quantities of marijuana in their possession and routinely sold amounts involving hundreds of dollars, they evidenced little concern about being arrested. Even Dave, who had been arrested for growing marijuana, and was careful about whom he sold it to, did not see marijuana as a criminal act for which he anticipated punishment.

SELF-DESTRUCTIVENESS

It is important to recognize that not all behavior that is self-destructive in its consequences is self-destructively motivated. With drug abuse, the consequences may be the price that one is willing to risk for the effect of the drug. Yet among these adolescent marijuana abusers, as with drug abusers in general, self-destructiveness was often an integral part of the motivation for their drug behavior.

Although most of the adolescents initially talked of their drug use in general and marijuana in particular as a conflict-free source of pleasure, in time almost all expressed greater ambivalence. Dave, who claimed to be joyfully high on marijuana whenever he could, eventually admitted that he felt he was wasting his life by being constantly stoned, and spoke of marijuana as taking away his ambition and drive, and thwarting his ability to express himself. Clara, who initially presented her marijuana use as harmless, later admitted that while others probably took drugs for pleasure she often approached this behavior with a "let something bad happen to me" attitude. Several of the youngsters, like Tim, were stoned to the degree of being nonfunctional for significant periods of time, while others, like Eddie, combined marijuana and alcohol in order to drug themselves into unconsciousness. The suicide attempts, both in our larger preliminary sample and among the cases selected for intensive study, were invariably made with drugs.

The representative cases often provided psychodynamic evidence both of the self-destructive nature of the marijuana abuse and of the sources of that self-destructiveness. Tim, for example, who used marijuana largely in an attempt to obliterate the pain and frustration of his relationship with his mother, dreamed that his mother was offering him a cup of tea (slang for marijuana) which was poisoned. He perceived his mother as having poisoned his life by failing to meet his needs while seeming to be offering to do so, and marijuana appeared to be serving a similar function.

ANGER

If marijuana abuse was often seen as a defiant or self-destructive act, it functioned more importantly in attempts to modify unpleasant, disturbing feelings and emotions, and in particular, to diminish the experience of anger.

For some youngsters, the anger they experienced toward their families was often felt to be uncontrollable and was part of a frequently felt, deeper, and more disturbing feeling that they hated their parents. Some dreamed or daydreamed of killing or otherwise eliminating all their family members. Some became extremely frightened by the extent of the violence they engaged in when angry. Marijuana helped these youngsters subdue their rage and control their violent impulses. Over and over, these adolescents talked about their use of marijuana as an attempt to relax from their tension and anger at home.

Dave, for example, had violent fights with his family in which he had destroyed things in the house, been verbally abusive, and hit his mother on occasion. His entire family, including Dave, was aware that he was never abusive nor destructive when stoned. Dave was particularly conscious that marijuana enabled him to relax enough from the tension of his anger with his family so that he could fall asleep at night.

On two occasions after fights with her family, Clara dreamed that the devil would get inside her and cut her off from her friends. Marijuana served to relieve her anger and tension and made it possible for her to be more comfortable with her friends as well as with her family.

Another young man used marijuana to withdraw into an almost chronic stupor to contain the rage he felt toward his parents over their confining expectations of him. He dreamed of being locked in a coffin from which he escaped with a magic button and then proceeded to beat up a teacher. The teacher he linked with his father, and in reality he used the magic of marijuana to keep his feelings contained on the level of dreams or fantasies rather than acting on them.

Psychodynamic evidence of a link between these youngsters' overwhelming anger toward their families and their self-destructiveness was invariably present. Eddie, for example, was preoccupied with thoughts of suicide. He had recurrent fantasies of escaping from the residential treatment center in which he had been placed, going home and shooting all the members of his family, and then dying in a gun battle with police. In a similar vein, it will be recalled, he dreamed his whole family was killed in a nuclear attack and he decided to fight rather than take shelter since he was going to die anyway. Another young man who feared his potential for violence toward his family when he was not high and felt marijuana gave him control over his anger, talked frequently of blowing himself away with a shotgun which he linked with "getting blown away" by smoking marijuana. His imagery suggests how marijuana can be the link between containment of anger and self-destructiveness.

GRANDIOSITY

Many of the marijuana-abusing adolescents seen felt that they amounted to nothing within the context of their own families. In the case of many of the young men, feelings of grandiosity helped alleviate the depression they experienced in this regard and encouraged their sense that magical transformation without effort was possible. Their use of marijuana to transform their mood was consistent with this aspect of their personalities. Several seemed to feel they were intended for some special destiny that would eventually become apparent. Dave's sense of his unimportance to his mother was in sharp contrast to the sense of self-importance he felt over his telepathic powers, demonstrated for him by such circumstances as meeting a person about whom he had been thinking. The incident he related in which he was trying to buy a pen to change the date on his birth certificate so that he could get into a bar, and was approached by several young men who asked if he had been "reborn" to Christ, confirmed, in Dave's view, the special meaning that surrounds his life.

Bobby also talked frequently of his special luck, believing that unusual things happened to him: If he needed something he would find it, or, without his asking, someone would give it to him. These rather grandiose feelings were reflected in Bobby's dream in which he was an outfielder playing professional baseball, was given a special glove that made every ball come into it, and became an immediate star.

He had this dream the night following an interview in which, after raising the question of what he was getting from the interview sessions, he talked about his recurrent thoughts of finding "a bottle with a genie in it." His attitude that he should get his high school diploma without having to study, his desire to be paid for his job without having to work, and his dream of being a star in a sport that he did not actually play, all reflect the attitude he brought to the interviews that in some magical way, without effort on his part, they should transform him. Marijuana helped sustain such illusions in youngsters like Bobby.

None of the young women marijuana abusers showed the type of grandiose fantasy found to be common among the young men, although they likewise tended to be highly unrealistic in their expectations of themselves and others. Particularly common among these young women was a feeling of invulnerability to any consequences of their behavior. They would talk of going on to college even though they were at the time flunking out of high school. They would describe impossible relationships with boyfriends who consistently abused them as somehow destined to end up well. Chances taken in their sexual relationships, they felt, would not end in pregnancy, and they would escape any harmful consequences of reckless marijuana abuse.

As discussed in an earlier chapter, a comparable attitude of invulnerability was often reflected in the risks and chances the young men took with cars and motorbikes. Among both the young men and young women there was clearly a psychological link between invulnerability and depression, between damaged self-esteem and grandiosity, between the idea that "nothing can happen to me" and the idea that "if it does, what's the difference."

ESCAPING COMPETITIVE PRESSURE

Marijuana abuse seen among college youngsters was often associated with attempts to resolve conflicts around achievement and performance (Hendin 1973, 1975, 1980). College students have usually accepted the value of competition and achievement, at least long enough to get to college, where many of them come to find competitive pressures intolerable. Feeling alternatively destructive when successful and humiliated when not, these young people frequently use marijuana to ease the intensity of this conflict.

The high-school-aged marijuana abusers had generally rejected competitive success through effort and acheivement early in life, long before they were interviewed. Because this group was younger, they were closer to the pain and anger of their early family relationships in which they had lost out in a more basic competition for their parents' affection. This loss left most of them unable to attain successful achievement through sustained effort or in competition with others. Yet marijuana abuse for these youngsters, as for many college students, clearly served a less achievement-oriented, less competitive adaptation.

Many of the adolescents reflected the pattern so much in evidence in Dave, who was living out the pain of his inability to meet his mother's rigid expectations through a withdrawal from competitive achievement that had begun at quite an early age. Others like Tim began to give up their aspirations in high school. In Tim's case, the use of marijuana as part of his desire to avoid competition was focused on his high-achieving, domineering older brother Dennis, whom Tim saw as having taken "the straight road" while he had taken "the high road."

As will be discussed in the concluding chapter, the connection between these adolescents' heavy use of marijuana and competitive pressures rooted in the family was further illustrated by several youngsters' improved adaptation, including a reduction in marijuana use, which accompanied their own and their parents' acceptance of

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their need for a less pressured, less competitive academic environment. Although in such environments these youngsters were much better able to cope with their difficulties with achievement and competition, and thus their need for marijuana significantly diminished, it was clear that their early family experiences had created problems with which they would be struggling long into their adult lives.

While marijuana abuse may seem to serve different functions for these youngsters, they are interrelated. Dave's use of marijuana, for example, alleviated the tension of his rage toward his family, rage that originated in the feeling that he could not please them. His inability to do so led him to withdraw from competition and achievement and to attempt to console himself with grandiose fantasies of wonderful things happening to him. Variations of this interrelationship were present in almost all the youngsters studied.

Overall, marijuana served to strengthen the imperfect defenses these adolescents used to deal with their experience. While it appeared to make more tolerable the anger and frustration the youngsters felt in their relationships with their families, it did so by encouraging passivity and illusion instead of any effective attempts to improve the situation. For many of the young women, marijuana seemed to reinforce a kind of masochistic passivity, helping them to feel detached from their anxiety over whether they could change their situations and permitting them to believe they did not care what happened to them or whether they got hurt. The young men often used marijuana to sustain grandiose fantasies and to alleviate the pain of the awareness that they were wasting their lives. Both the young men and the young women, through their marijuana abuse, substituted an imagined, unrealistic gain for the anxiety-arousing situations in which other young people try to achieve something real. Marijuana in these young people did not produce a lack of ambition. Rather, marijuana abuse expressed in illusory ways the adolescents' desire for power, achievement, and control.

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III. Psychological Test Results

Chapter 7

An Overview of Psychological Test Results

Psychological tests offered independent support and confirmation for much of what was learned through the interviews about the difficulties of the adolescent marijuana abusers. In this chapter, the most significant results obtained through these tests are summarized for the 17 abusers as a group. In keeping with the primary goal of the testing to obtain an assessment of the adolescents' cognitive functioning and key personality disturbances, this overview is organized into these two broad sections. Because of the study's emphasis on the family as the critical context for understanding the youngsters' abuse of marijuana, a final section is included in which the test results pertaining specifically to the family are briefly discussed.

COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

The psychological test results supported the impression that these adolescents would have difficulty with school. Although the tests were not specifically chosen to detect learning disorders, test reports frequently raised the possibility of their existence in these youngsters. This inference was often speculative, since toxic effects accompanying heavy marijuana use can be difficult to distinguish from longstanding learning disorders, as reflected in concentration and attention deficits, word-finding difficulties, and poor recent memory. Functioning at the bright normal level, one young man, for example, nevertheless could recall only three digits backwards on the Digit Span subtest of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS) and showed strikingly poor spelling ability (e.g., "hight", "beutiful," "nessity"). He had a learning disorder that had been documented at an early age.

Test reports frequently stressed the lacunae in the range of information as reflected in the youngsters' functioning on the WAIS. While the individual intelligence quotients (IQ's) were all within normal limits and seemingly represented a normal distribution of the general population (full scale IQ's ranged from 90 to 124), the Information subtest scores were among the lowest of the WAIS subscores. Even where this was not the case, there was great variability in functioning on this subtest, where many of the adolescents failed easy items while knowing more difficult ones. For example, the adolescent with the highest full scale IQ (at the superior level) showed striking gaps in his factual knowledge. While knowing the meaning of "ethnology" and who wrote Faust (questions at the highest level), he guessed that the average American woman is 5 feet 8 1/2 inches tall, that "Milano" is the capital of Italy, and that Washington's birthday is February 14.

Other marijuana abusers had more striking deficits in terms of their factual knowledge. One girl of average IQ did not know the number of weeks in the year, or the direction of Panama from Chicago, and guessed that Brazil is in Europe. One boy (with an IQ in the high average range) had no idea who Longfellow was and guessed that the direction of Panama from Chicago is west, while a girl of similar overall IQ guessed that there are 56 weeks in the year and that Panama is west from Chicago. Another had no idea where rubber comes from, could not name four men who have been president of the United States since 1900, and guessed that there are 316 weeks in the year and that Brazil is in Africa. It is to be stressed again that these examples, and others equally striking, all occurred in the context of overall intellectual functioning that was at least average or above.

The marijuana abusers' limitations in the area of factual information are undoubtedly related to their attitudes toward school and formal learning opportunities. It is not surprising that school learning would suffer with youngsters who throughout the day may be stoned on marijuana or other drugs, even if their attitudes toward school were generally positive.

To view the deficiency in factual knowledge simply as the result of drug usage, however, is to oversimplify its potential significance. Basic to the assumed significance of this finding is the awareness that teachers and parents judge a child's intelligence by how much he or she knows (that is, by his or her range of information). Although intelligence is actually a global concept represented on the WAIS by 11 different subtests, presumably tapping 11 different but equally important abilities or aspects of intelligence, it is to accumulated factual knowledge ("information") that teachers and parents invariably are referring when making the judgment that a child is "brilliant," "average," or "stupid." Thus, by being deficient in this particular area, the marijuana abusers, regardless of their adequate IQ's, are losing an important means of demonstrating their acceptability as persons and of having it confirmed and reconfirmed. It is at adolescence that intellectualization as a defense generally comes into prominence, so that its unavailability for the marijuana abuser means that an important subliminatory channel is absent at a time when other stresses, quite apart from those of maintaining high levels of marijuana use, are in the ascendency. The ultimate effects of this loss on self-image may transcend in importance any presumed "objective" damage that drug usage may directly cause.

Since Card 1 on the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) ("boy-violin"

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scene) is frequently assumed to elicit stories that reflect attitudes toward achievement, special attention was paid to the stories told to this stimulus. Stories were evaluated specifically for evidence of the youngster's presumed attitude towards achieving competence at the task posed either overtly (playing the violin) or covertly (sex-role identification) by the picture. At least half of the marijuana abusers told stories reflecting resistance and disinterest in achieving the presumed task. Typical of such stories were the following:

> His mother made him learn to play the violin...he dreads it. So he's just sitting there looking at it; saying, "Oh, God, I hate this thing." (Outcome?) He'll probably sit there another four hours without practicing.
>
> His mother said he had to take violin lessons and he said "I'm not going to," but his mother said he has to...He won't do it and his mother will give up.
>
> A young kid whose mother wants him to play the violin. She always makes him practice and he doesn't like to play the violin. So he tries to think of excuses of why he shouldn't play. And then he just refused to play. (Outcome?) His mother will finally give up.
>
> The kid is forced to take violin lessons and he doesn't like it at all. Nothing else to say. (Outcome?) Be mad at his parents or whoever's making him take lessons.
>
> When he was very young he was forced, well, not forced but his parents wanted him to play an instrument. He had no choice...Now he thinks he shouldn't play something he doesn't want to. And in the future he won't play it... He probably played for a while until he's 15 and then he won't play it anymore.
>
> A boy learning to play the violin and the other kids were a lot better than he was...He doesn't want to play it. That's it.
>
> His mother forced him to take violin lessons and he can't be successful and finally talked his mother into letting him give it up.

Perhaps most striking in these and other stories are the adolescents' sense of pressure to conform to parental wishes rather than to their own aspirations. Of equal importance is their awareness of their ability to frustrate those parental goals.

KEY PERSONALITY DISTURBANCES

Two significant types of personality disturbances which consistently emerged in the psychological tests given to the 17 marijuana abusers were problems of impulse control and disturbances related to self-concept.

Impulse Control Problems

That these adolescents had serious impulse control problems was supported by four types of test evidence that frequently led to inferences about impulsivity, acting-out, and inadequate delaying defenses:

1. Higher performance IQ's than verbal IQ's. As evidence of their tendency to act out motorically, discharging or reacting against depression or anxiety by action rather than by verbal means, 12 of the 17 adolescents showed a performance IQ approximately equal to or greater than their verbal IQ. In this respect they failed to show the inhibition of action that frequently accompanies psychological impairment or distress.

2. High Pd (psychopathic deviate) scores on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). Of the 14 youngsters who completed the MMPI, 13 received one of their three highest scale scores on the psychopathic deviate scale, and 8 of the adolescents had this scale as their highest score. High scores on this scale are interpreted as reflecting negativism toward authority and unconventionality of behavior, often thought to reflect character problems not easily altered by psychotherapy.

3. Emphasis on color-dominated Rorschach responses. Almost all the marijuana abusers showed a large number of color-dominated responses on the Rorschach which are suggestive of affect-driven responsivity. In most cases such responses were not counterbalanced by a significant number of human movement responses (suggestive of mature fantasy that might serve to delay or inhibit action) or by significant form-dominated perceptions (suggestive of controlled responsivity).

4. Absence of intellectuality as a defense. As was discussed earlier in relation to the generally low Information subtest scores received by most of the youngsters on the WAIS, they did not give evidence to any significant extent of either intellectuality or other obsessive-compulsive defenses, which might serve to inhibit or delay motoric action.

From such psychological test evidence, the overall impression of the marijuana abusers was that of an action-oriented group, not prone to inhibit or delay responses, and as a result likely to be in conflict with others, whether peers or family.

Disturbances Related to Self-Concept

Consistent with the view that the marijuana abusers were action-oriented individuals whose difficulties were acted out on the environment, few expressed much discrepancy between their actual self-concept and their ideal self-concept. When asked on the psychological questionnaire the nature or cause of their problems and what they felt would help them get over these difficulties, the youngsters reported little about themselves they wanted to change or be changed. In spite of their often serious difficulties with law enforcement agencies, school, and the family, they usually reported that they had no problems or that the solution to their problems was as simple as "freedom," "moving away," "leaving home," "finding a job," "moving in with a boyfriend," "getting hypnotized," "losing weight," and so on.

Both the causes of and the solution to their problems were almost invariably viewed as something outside themselves. Regardless of whatever problems marijuana was causing, many frankly said they did not want to change this practice. In this regard, psychological reports stressed the probable difficulty in engaging the youngsters in psychotherapy or any change process, since they seemed to have little motivation for personality change, and saw their psychological difficulties, if any, as generally caused by external factors. For example, to such sentence stems on the Sentence Completion Test (SCT) as "He (she) often wished he (she) could...," "Most of all I want...," and "More than anything else he (she) needed..., stems presumably tapping dominant drives, the youngsters' verbalized wishes generally involved possessions ("a cigarette," "a car," " a minibike," "a horse,") or intangibles ("love," "freedom," "flying away"). Desire for "friends," "boyfriends," and "girlfriends" was also indicated frequently. These responses, however, never appeared in the context of any expressed desire to change much about themselves -- fulfillment generally meant or was dependent upon someone or something outside the self.

Tests reflecting more unconscious self-attitudes or underlying difficulties (particularly the evidence from the Rorschach test) suggested several reasons for the marijuana abusers' being much less complacent about themselves than they actually were willing or able to report consciously. For example, in contrast to their functioning on the WAIS, where cues for appropriate action are clearly indicated and where all the youngsters functioned at the average to superior levels, they all showed moderate to serious personality disturbance on the Rorschach, a test that offers little structure and that forces the subject to rely more on internal cues for making an appropriate response.

Five kinds of Rorschach test evidence supported the impression that the adolescents had more difficulties than their conscious reports revealed:

1. Fabulized combination (fab comb) responses. Rorschach responses scored fab comb are instances in which disparate

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aspects of the blots are integrated in an unusual way, either contrary to usually perceived reality or inappropriate as to size relationships. Such responses presumably reflect a struggle to integrate disparate aspects of the self-concept and are consistent with inferred identity conflicts or identity diffusion. Examples of such responses which were given by 12 of the 17 youngsters, include:
"A rabbit with green hair"
"A spider with a butterfly on his stomach"
"A lady with a mustache with some kind of bat sitting on her head"
"A little person with wings"
"Flying monkey"
"A monster wearing a bowtie on his back"
"A body with lungs"
"Something sitting on a tree...mouse or something... mountain, not a tree"
"A robot...it has branches, and can see its heart... heart and bowtie, too"

2. Responses conveying a sense of damage or derogation, whether of the self or of others. Examples of such responses which were given by 11 of the 17 adolescents, include:
"Looks like a clown"
"A crab that's been torn apart"
"Some sort of little people"
"Some kind of monster...eyes pushed in"
"Two heads...like necks are connecting together...old man with big nose"
"A deformed person looking out from some bushes"
"A negro...got hit in the mouth...very stoned"
"A cat squashed by a mack truck"
"Bug...squashed"
"Something with three legs, doesn't look human"
"A beetle...he's bleeding"
"Looks like a little midget"

3. Human responses including sexual characteristics of both sexes, or responses in which symetrical figures are viewed as being of opposite sexes. Such responses are suggestive of confused sexual identification. Examples of such responses, given by 3 or the 17 youngsters include:
"Two people, man and woman"
"Small boy and a girl"
"Two people facing each other, one male and one female"

4. Absence of the usually perceived "popular" human percepts, suggestive of defective empathic linkages and difficulty in identifying with other humans. Eight of the 17 adolescents failed to produce the usually seen human percepts.

5. Unusual emphasis on disjointed body parts without sufficient emphasis on whole-detail responses, suggestive of unusual anxiety about the body. Examples of such records, given by 3 or the 17 marijuana abusers include:

Record 1
"Someone's nose...end of it, nostrils"
"Two eyes"
"Nose of a raccoon"
"Fingers sticking out"
Record 2
"Collar bone"
"Two hands"
"Vagina"
"Feet"
"Penis"
"Some kind of anatomy"
Record 3
"Skeleton...just the head"
"Brain"
"Two legs"
"Two breasts"
"Two hands"
"Two feet"

All of the marijuana abusers showed a deficiency in at least one of these five areas, with 15 showing a deficiency in at least two, and 4 of these 15 showing a deficiency in three or more of the areas. The contrast between the relatively adequate functioning of the adolescents in the structured tasks posed by the WAIS and these evidences of thought and perceptual difficulties in the unstructured tasks posed by the Rorschach test is similar to that reported for the borderline personality organization (Carr 1979; Singer 1977). Regardless of clinical label, however, the impression from test evidence is that all of these youngsters had moderate to serious personality disturbances.

Test Results Pertaining to the Family

Evidence from psychological tests most directly related to parental figures were the responses to the self-report background questionnaire (Carr 1972) on which each youngster was asked to "Describe the kind of person your mother is and your relation to her," and "Describe the kind of person your father is and your relation to him." When each description was classified in terms of whether the parent was described in positive, ambivalent, or negative terms, 15 of the 17 adolescents described the relationship with at least one parent as ambivalent at best. The two youngsters who presented a positive view of each parent gave extremely circumscribed descriptions: "She is nice and we have a good relationship...(father) same as mother." "A good person, friendly person...(father) works hard, good to people."

Mothers were generally described in more positive terms than were fathers. In only one case, a girl, was the description of the mother clearly less positive than that of the father. This finding is perhaps not unusual with an adolescent population, since it is the father who generally is the authority figure in the family, presumed to be responsible for controlling the behavior of the child. Nevertheless, too much should not be made of these conscious reports, nor should they necessarily be taken at face value. As reported elsewhere (Carr 1980), evidence suggests that hostility is often expressed to the safer parental figure rather than to the more threatening one. The impression gained from contrasting conscious descriptions of parental figures with relevant Rorschach imagery is consistent with the finding of Harris (1948) that a large number of persons who report dreams presumably reflecting a fear of loss of love and support (a threat in our culture generally emanating from the mother-figure) more frequently report conscious hostility to the father. Likewise, those who report dreams presumably reflecting fear of castration and bodily harm (a threat generally emanating from the father-figure) more frequently report conscious hostility to the mother. Such evidence dramatizes the limitations of studies that rely solely on questionnaires and conscious reports without application of psychodynamic understanding.

On the SCT, most of the marijuana abusers provided completions about parents which were either openly hostile evaluative statements (Most fathers "are jerks"; when he thought of his mother he "got sick"), or factual statements assumed to reflect denial (Most mothers "are women"; My mother "was a female"; My mother "always cooks dinner"). About the most positive completions provided by any of the youngsters were comments on the parents' sense of justice or fairness (My father always "taught me wrong from right"; My father always "was fair"). Little consistency appeared among the various completions of any youngster, however, a finding stemming at least partly from the fact that SCT items may alternate between serving as projective test stimuli or direct-response items. This inconsistency may also relate to shifting, unstable views by the marijuana abusers of their parents.

Unconscious attitudes can perhaps be assumed to be reflected more consistently in TAT stories. The "family-farm" scene of the TAT is often assumed to elicit attitudes about and within the family, since it depicts figures most often viewed as a family triangle: mother, father, and daughter. While the older characters were sometimes described in negative terms, more frequently the stories told by the adolescents to this card showed little real interaction or relatedness between the characters, and often depicted the central female character at an emotional distance from the other figures or in conflict with their goals. Bleak resolutions were also frequent in the developed themes. Examples of such stories were the following:

> Looks like the girl's been going to school, become educated while the guy still works on the farm. She seems to be disillusioned with the shallowness of their hopes in life and although she once loved the guy working with the horse, she'll

> end up marrying some college guy.
>
> Girl who works on a farm. And her father doesn't want her to go to school -- wants her to work on the farm. Said it was a waste and he needed her to work on the farm. So she enrolls in school behind his back and then he finds out and he wouldn't let her go. So then she -- I don't know -- she left, went downtown, got married and went to school.
>
> She lives where people are farming and, well, she wants to be educated and learn. Don't think she wants to be a farmer, the girl with the books. (Outcome?) I don't know. She's gonna go to school. I don't know.
>
> Looks like a young girl going to school and she's thinking or something and her parents are working in the field. Her father is ... I don't know what mother is doing. That's it.
>
> I'd say a girl returning from school and on way home passes by this farm run by wife and husband with their horse. I guess she's watching them and she goes on her merry way home.
>
> Girl is on -- by the shadow looks like she's on way home from school. And she's passing a guy working in the fields and she's sort of looking at him. Thinking of what a good worker he is looking over at his wife. Looks as if she's pregnant. Kind of saying, "Oh, he's married, forget it." That's about it. Nothing happened between him and her.

The one story that most reflected a mutuality of goals within the family, perhaps significantly, involved a bleak resolution as its outcome:

> Once upon a time a girl named Emma. She lived on a farm with her mother and brother. Every springtime they would have to plant the fields. But this time they planted too early. Her mother, brother, and her were very hungry because they didn't have any crops to sell.

Thus in their unconscious attitudes, as well as in their directly expressed feelings and their behavior, the marijuana-abusing adolescents evidenced considerable distance, ambivalence, anger, and, at times, helplessness, in their relationships within the family. Additional insight into this finding is provided in the following chapter through a comparison of the psychological test results of five pairs of abusers and their siblings.

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Chapter 8

Psychological Contrast of Marijuana Abusers and Their Siblings

When the psychological test findings of the marijuana-abusing adolescents were compared with those of their siblings, interesting similarities and differences were found. Brief summaries of these comparisons are presented for the five pairs of youngsters described in Chapter 4.

Clara and Vanessa D

On psychological testing, both Clara and Vanessa were functioning at the average level of intelligence, with IQ's as indicated:

Clara (Marijuana Abuser)		Vanessa	
Verbal IQ	93	Verbal IQ	99
Performance IQ	92	Performance IQ	112
Full Scale IQ	92	Full Scale IQ	105

Although both girls said they wanted to go to college, neither one seemed to rely on intellectualization as a defense nor to profit sufficiently from new learning experiences. For example, the Information subtest for each showed glaring limitations of factual knowledge, as each missed such easy items as the number of weeks in a year, and the direction of Chicago to Panama. In view of Clara's limitations, her aspirations appeared somewhat grandiose. For example, on the SCT stem "She felt she couldn't succeed unless...," Clara added, "she went to colledge (sic)." Responding to TAT Card 2 ("family-farm scene"), she said, "This chick belongs to a hard-working family that works in the farm and everything. And she's a writer and she's very successful, but she hasn't published any of her books yet. And she just finished writing a book. And that's it." To TAT Card 8BM ("boy-operation scene") she replied, "This guy is daydreaming about being a famous surgeon. That's it." Neither TAT story revealed any explicit or implicit awareness of the effort and work necessary to achieve the aspirations indicated.

Clara directly reported the resentment and anger she felt toward her mother and father, describing her mother on the self-report questionnaire as "immature" and her father as "stupid." Her chipon-the-shoulder attitude appeared to camouflage deep-rooted needs for nurturance.

Vanessa presented herself in her questionnaire responses as the "good" girl, describing her mother as "very considerate" and her father as "hard-working and considerate of others." She gave evidence of being much more overtly dependent than Clara. Her conscious anger was directed toward Clara whom she saw as the cause of her problems. To a question asking about her present psychological problems, she stated, "My present psychological problem is my sister." This suggested that Clara may be the target for anger and resentment that Vanessa was unable to express toward her parents. Vanessa was more depressed than was apparent in her behavior, reflected in such Rorschach responses as "a weeping willow," "a mummy's tomb," and "a sunset."

Clara saw "freedom!" as the solution to all of her own problems; Vanessa saw the solution to her problems as having Clara sent to a boarding school. The insight of both girls thus appeared poor, and Clara, in particular, gave little evidence of any motivation for personality change, wanting only to be free to do as she wanted.

On the Rorschach test, both girls showed sufficient evidence of thought disturbance to suggest borderline features with acting-out tendencies. Both girls also gave responses of people or animals engaged in "arguing" and "fighting." Test responses indicated that Vanessa probably experienced greater guilt and feelings of inferiority than did Clara. Vanessa's capacity for withdrawal (inferred from such Rorschach responses as "a mouse going into a hole in the wall," "entrance to a building," "tunnel," and "entrance into a library") suggested that, while Clara presently presented the greater behavior problems in the view of her parents and community, Vanessa may have actually been more disturbed and more likely to have difficulties in future adjustment.

Tim and Dennis H

On psychological testing, Tim was functioning at the bright normal level of intelligence, while Dennis was functioning at the superior level. IQ's were as indicated below:

Tim (Marijuana Abuser)		Dennis	
Verbal IQ	112	Verbal IQ	124
Performance IQ	113	Performance IQ	128
Full Scale IQ	113	Full Scale IQ	128

Tim was a pleasant, albeit anxious, subject to test. He gave a highly idiosyncratic Rorschach record, perseverating the response "vagina" on every card, sometimes in more than one location. While seeing "a penis" on a few occasions, the plethora of "vagina" responses was interpreted as a reactive defense against fears of homosexuality, in terms of the possible protest, "You see how really interested in women I am!" Evidence of a sexual disturbance was substantiated by his own report on the self-report questionnaire that, along with drug dependency, his problems included "unsure sexuality." The apparent degree of his disturbance revealed on the Rorschach suggested the possibility of future decompensation unless pressures on him were relieved.

Neither brother was particularly insightful. Tim felt that getting hypnotized might help him get over his difficulties, reflecting a wish for a magical solution to all his problems while he played a passive role. From Dennis' own description of himself on the questionnaire, one would assume that he was a model of adjustment. His other test results showed a quite different picture. His testing was scheduled under a time pressure since he was soon leaving town, having been accepted at a military academy on the basis of his outstanding recommendations and evidences of achievement. Nevertheless, his Rorschach record had numerous examples of thought-disordered responses. For example, to Card 1 he gave the following responses:

> "I see an insect looking straight at me...four eyes, sort slanty evil eyes, looking straight at you."
>
> "Almost looks like two winged men over here clinging onto a central thing...almost looks like trying to pull it apart, separate it."
>
> "Sort of like an elephant almost...no real trunk or body, like an armored elephant, wearing armament with spikes."

His interpretation of the frequently perceived figures on Card III as having "both male and female qualities," and his attributing "sickly" and "undeveloped" qualities to other perceived figures, were interpreted as reflecting unresolved sexual ambivalence, confused sexual identification, and body-image difficulties. He also reported that he worried about sex.

Both Tim and Dennis confirmed the example of borderline personality organization, since both showed intact functioning on the WAIS in spite of the primary process or thought-disordered responses reflected in their Rorschach tests. Dennis appeared to seek and be more dependent upon structure than did Tim, and thus appeared much more conforming and conventional. He had an almost perfect score on the Comprehension subtest of the WAIS, suggestive of compensatory attempts to rely on social convention and external structure. Individuals with high scores on this subtest (both actual and relative to their other scores) tend to be inflexible and to dichotomize life's problems into right versus wrong alternatives. Such persons can sometimes be punitive to anyone who violates their moral code which they precisely define. Although this approach to life could work well in a military context, it also offers the potential for Dennis' becoming depressed and disillusioned when life does not prove to be as simple as he has structured it to be.

Dave and Fred M

On psychological testing Dave was functioning at the bright normal level of intelligence, while Fred was functioning at the average level. IQ's were as indicated below:

Dave (Marijuana Abuser)		Fred	
Verbal IQ	118	Verbal IQ	106
Performance IQ	108	Performance IQ	91
Full Scale IQ	115	Full Scale IQ	100

Not only did Dave's intellectual efficiency seem greater than that of his brother, but Dave also showed fewer objective test indices of disturbance than did Fred. It was inferred that Fred was more competitive for achievement and money than was Dave. Such Rorschach responses as "two people holding up some sort of Stanley trophy," "two dogs both trying to smell the same thing," "two people trying to hang onto something," "someone doing a commercial for shoes," "someone at a costume party, in a cape," and "two elephants racing to get apples," project significant exhibitionistic, striving, competitive impulses that operate in Fred to a degree not found in Dave. These impulses may keep Fred more conforming to family and society standards than Dave, although Fred may have the more ominous prognosis. The possibility of self-destructive or suicidal impulses in Fred was suggested by such Rorschach responses as those he gave to Card IV: "Looks like someone may have come out of the sea and got covered with seaweed... like a normal person covered with seaweed"; "Looks like someone might have been hung or something and now there is all the garbage or moss over the body...been hanging there a long time...I guess mold." Such responses are considered to be highly morbid and idiosyncratic.

It was inferred that Dave had felt hurt and rejected in his family and may have been retaliating for this. A significant part of his self-image was believed to be conveyed in his story to the blank TAT card: "The Mona Lisa. She's a woman. She's a real person in picture. There for many years. She's unconscious and can't express herself. Can't move. Can't talk. Trying to shrink, wrinkle. Figures if no one can understand she's a real person, she's not going to let anyone enjoy her." To the SCT stem, "I used to feel I was being held back by...," he added "my parents but then I showed them."

As to what would help him over his difficulties, he indicated first, "quitting or decreasing pot," and second, "leaving home on good terms." He reported his key problem, however, was the way society judges people.

Like Dave, Fred showed difficulties with impulse control. While both brothers showed greater than expected indications of sexual confusion and feelings of vulnerability about the body, Fred appeared inordinately reluctant to reveal himself or to admit to psychological weakness. On the SCT, for example, he described "my sexual desires" as "none of your business." Rorschach content also raised the possibility of his being sexually conflicted. Fred saw himself as not having many problems to speak of ("none of which are serious enough to analyze"), but in this regard presented himself as very limited in insight or understanding. It was inferred that both brothers showed moderate to great psychological disturbance but that overall Fred appeared the more disturbed.

Eddie and Deborah J

On psychological testing, Eddie was functioning at the average level of intelligence and Deborah was functioning at the bright normal level with IQ's as indicated:

Eddie (Marijuana Abuser)		Deborah	
Verbal IQ	96	Verbal IQ	117
Performance IQ	97	Performance IQ	117
Full Scale IQ	96	Full Scale IQ	118

Eddie's performance suggested some indications of a learning disability. His personality functioning appeared to be that of a boy who wanted his own needs met without expectation of reciprocal involvement with others. Although he evidenced role-playing skills that could initially help create a favorable impression, his immaturity in social judgment showed through in a way that would lead others ultimately to reject him, leaving him frustrated and dejected.

On the Rorschach test, he gave no human responses, although his sense of inner turmoil and fear of loss of control were believed to be projected in his response, "a tornado..., looks like its spinning." He had a marked sense of inadequacy about his school grades and on the SCT indicated that his first impulse was to fight (My first reaction to him was "to beat him up"; While he was speaking to me I "punched him"). He appeared to be very sensitive to slight. His father was perceived as possibly getting vicarious gratification out of Eddie's acting out. At the very least, Eddie appeared to have great difficulty making a happy and mature identification with his father who appeared to be a source of fear and intimidation to him. This was reflected in his completing the SCT stem, "Whenever he was with his father he felt...," with the word, "scared." While clearly unhappy, Eddie gave little evidence of motivation for personality change, rather expecting others to change.

Deborah showed evidence of passive-aggressive conflicts, with excessive dependency needs that probably kept her aggression in check. She appeared very sensitive to embarrassment and to criticism and anticipated rejection from others. She seemed likely to vacillate between withdrawal and overparticipation. Withdrawal was possibly reflected in statements suggesting that her greatest pleasure came from activities she could do by herself. Deborah seemed to use such strategies as a means of avoiding expression of aggression. She consciously admitted to getting depressed, being shy and insecure. Sex and aggression were fused and she gave evidence of entertaining the wish/fear of being taken forcibly.

Her Rorschach responses suggested that her underlying self-image fluctuated between devaluation ("a clown's face"; "baby elephants on a bell") and idealization ("ballerinas in a pose"), perceptions that undoubtedly alternate in relation to others as well. Her self-acceptance at any time appeared to be very dependent on others' reactions to her. On the SCT she admitted to worrying about getting old and to feeling less smart than others gave her credit for being. Strong narcissistic features were also indicated. Deborah, however, appeared to be fairly amenable to psychotherapy because of her present unhappiness.

Bobby and Diane G

On psychological testing, Bobby was functioning at the average level of intelligence while Diane was functioning at the bright normal level. IQ's were as indicated below.

Bobby (Marijuana Abuser)		Diane	
Verbal IQ	104	Verbal IQ	110
Performance IQ	108	Performance IQ	112
Full Scale IQ	106	Full Scale IQ	112

Bobby showed many deficits consistent with a severe learning disability or a hyperkinetic syndrome: his overall functioning was most uneven, he misspelled simple words by leaving out letters, he wrote letters backwards, and showed a very short attention span. On the WAIS he could recall only three digits backwards. While his reality testing was considered to be relatively adequate, he showed considerable identity diffusion and used primitive defensive operations. The character of his human responses was of quasihuman "spacemen...with a weird body," "a monster," and "space creatures." The only solidly human percept was of "a negro...just hit in the mouth with a tennis ball and he's very, very stoned." In light of his revealed preoccupation with his kinky hair, this response undoubtedly reflected aspects of his own demeaned, damaged self-concept.

His view of any authority, as reflected in his SCT completions, was quite negative: (Taking orders "stinks"; When I met my boss, I "puked"; People in authority are "bastards"). Nevertheless, at some level he recognized that he did not understand his own behavior and he wished for greater understanding from others as well. (More than anything else he needed "someone to understand him"; People seem to think "I'm weird"). He seemed to cover his feelings of fear and inadequacy with a facade of bravado, adding to the SCT stem, "When I feel that others don't like me, I...," the phrase, "put on an act."

While Diane's functioning was more intact than Bobby's, she also showed evidence of using many primitive defenses; idealization and devaluation were prominent. To areas on the Rorschach test frequently seen as people, Diane gave such associations as "an angel" and "two monkeys bowling." She had strong oppositional and projective tendencies. She appeared to have a very active fantasy life that may have qualities of the autistic. For example, on the Rorschach test she gave the response, "two badgers or moles... thing in the middle is grabbing one of their paws and pulling... pulling them up...the badger God, some spirit or something... maybe these two things died and are going up to their heaven." While she smiled at this percept, suggesting she could detach herself from it, the response nevertheless reflected a serious defensive failure. She seemed to experience significant fears of loss of control. It was inferred that Diane's relationship with her parents was fused with oedipal struggles, which she was acting out in her relationship with a boyfriend whom she may have been using as a way of upsetting and getting the attention of her father. It was concluded that the integrative failures revealed by Diane's tests were consistent with borderline personality organization.

Chapter 9

Discussion of Psychological Test Findings

As illustrated by the five pairs of youngsters discussed in the previous chapter, the psychological tests provided evidence of a significant degree of psychopathology among both the marijuana abusers and their siblings. In the case of the abusers, these tests results were quite consistent with the diagnosis one would be inclined to make on the basis of the material obtained through the unstructured interviews. The patterns evidenced in the clinical data gathered from these youngsters as a group -- their identity disturbances; their intense, unstable relationships; their impulsivity and unpredictability; their inappropriate or intense anger; their physically self-damaging acts; their affective instability; their chronic feelings of emptiness or boredom; their underachievement in school and work; and their problems with being alone -- support a diagnosis of most of the marijuana abusers as borderline personalities (Gunderson and Kolb 1978; Perry and Klerman 1980). The psychological test results for this group likewise point in this direction.

Regarding the siblings of the marijuana abusers, however, a rather wide discrepancy emerged between the view derived from the interview material and that suggested by the psychological test findings. With very few exceptions, the siblings appeared on the basis of their verbal behavior and general functioning within the interview situation to be relatively free of significant psychopathology. This is not to say there was no clinical evidence of serious problems with the siblings; clearly, the family pathology and the insecurity it generated had in basic ways affected the siblings as well as the marijuana abusers. In their patterns of relatively high achievement, as well as in their lack of impulsiveness, self-destructiveness, and emotional lability, however, the large majority of the siblings did not show evidence of borderline pathology.

In contrast, the psychological tests showed this group of youngsters as having no consistent differences in integrative functioning from their marijuana-abusing brothers or sisters. In particular, idiosyncratic and morbid responses to unstructured stimuli in the tests were as characteristic of the nondrug-abusing siblings as they were of the marijuana abusers.

This finding held quite consistently across all 11 sibling-abuser pairs, which, in addition to those cases already described in some detail, included a marijuana-abusing young man whose delinquency ultimately put him in jail and his happily married older brother who was a successful young accountant; and a highly unstable young female abuser who was involved with a delinquent young man who mistreated her and her sister who was both happily married and showing signs of becoming a success in her career.

The psychological tests indicated that the differences in behavior and achievement between the marijuana abusers and their nondrug-abusing siblings were not a function of significant differences in intellectual endowment or general cognitive functioning. When each marijuana-abusing subject was compared with his or her sibling for the 11 pairs in which both youngsters was tested, four were found to have IQ's slightly higher than those of their siblings, six had slightly lower IQ's, and one was found to have an IQ identical to that of the sibling.

Further, a comparison of the individual subtest scores for each of the 11 pairs showed no significant pattern in favor of either group, except for the Information subtest, on which 10 of the marijuana abusers did less well than their siblings. The presumed significance of deficits in accumulated factual knowledge measured by this subtest has already been discussed in Chapter 7. As indicated in this discussion, it was not considered surprising that this facet of intelligence would suffer in youngsters who were often stoned on marijuana throughout the day.

These findings, indicating quite similar intellectual profiles and equal degrees of disturbance existing in both marijuana-abusing and nondrug-abusing siblings, indicate that family pathology affects the "adjusted" sibling much more than appears evident on the surface. At the same time, the considerable discrepancies in behavior between the two groups suggest that one's ability to cope with pathology may be more significant than the pathology itself in determining the outcome for the youngster. Perhaps most importantly, differences in the abusers' and siblings' ability even to deal with the family itself were clearly determined by family dynamics.

One interesting example of the way in which family roles and expectations created quite different coping capacities in the marijuana abusers and their siblings was seen in the case of the H's where the entire family considered Tim to be much more intellectually gifted than his older brother Dennis. On the WAIS, however, Tim's full scale IQ score of 113 was 15 points lower than the 128 obtained by his brother Dennis. Even if these scores are adjusted somewhat to account for Tim's possibly reduced performance as a result of his heavy marijuana smoking, they clearly do not support the longstanding family view. Dennis' and his parents' acceptance of his "lesser" ability resulted in a situation of reduced pressure and expectation within the family, as well as highly favorable responses to his considerable achievement. For Tim, however, this distortion created inappropriately high expectations and a situation in which he was almost guaranteed to fail in his parents' eyes no matter what he did. The outcome for both boys, outside as well as within the family, had far greater significance than any actual differences in ability between them.

The nondrug abusers had generally learned how to get at least a minimal amount of gratification and support from their relationships with their parents. It is significant that on the self-report questionnaire they expressed affection for at least one and often both of their parents, while anger if not outright hatred for one or both parents was most typically expressed by the marijuana abusers. In addition, the nondrug-abusing siblings appeared to have accepted parental goals and values and learned that compliance at home, at school, and at work had some built-in rewards.

At the same time that they tried to fulfill their parents' aspirations, however, they had been deeply affected by their parents' tension and insecurity, and undoubtedly much of this came to light in their psychological test responses. Although they were conscious of wishing to avoid the conflicts they saw as deriving from the defiance of their marijuana-abusing brother or sister, they most often indicated conscious or unconscious guilt about the unfair treatment afforded them in comparison to their siblings. Moreover, recognizing that the differences between themselves and their siblings were not as great as they appeared, they seemed to sense that the approval they received from their parents was conditional, fragile, and worst of all, based on parental misperceptions of who they really were. Again, such emotional conflicts and fears clearly had taken a toll on the nondrug-abusing group in terms of their psychological well-being.

One final point which should be made is that the psychological tests indicated that both the marijuana abusers and the nondrug abusers had comparable difficulties in dealing with unstructured situations. The interview material, however, suggested that the nondrug-abusing siblings, in contrast to the marijuana abusers, knew how to avoid putting themselves in such situations. Indeed, their avoidance of drug abuse itself was partially related to their desire for maintaining control and structure in their lives. If they felt forced to suppress feelings of anxiety or resentment, they seemed to feel that this was not too great a price to pay for the sense of order and predictability this afforded them, and which appeared to bring them a considerable measure of success.

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IV. Conclusion

Chapter 10

Summary of Findings

This research began with the broad goal of understanding marijuana abuse among white, middle and working class, high-school-aged adolescents, by viewing this behavior within the psychodynamic context of the family. Particular attention was paid to exploring, through unstructured interviews, what in the adolescent's adaptation and interaction with his or her family contributed to the marijuana abuse, and to identifying, through both the interviews and psychological tests, the functions which marijuana plays in the adolescent's overall psychosocial adaptation. The 17 marijuana-abusing adolescents and their families who participated in the study provided clear and consistent evidence that family psychodynamics contribute to these youngsters' abuse of marijuana and work to shape the specific meaning such abuse has for each of them. In this chapter, these dynamics are summarized in terms of several key topics which have been illuminated by the findings of the study.

FAMILY PATTERNS CONTRIBUTING TO ADOLESCENT MARIJUANA ABUSE

A primary focus of this research was on understanding the ways in which the family had operated early in the lives of these marijuana-abusing youngsters to give them the worst rather than the best of what their parents had to offer. In some cases this occurred because the youngster was born after the family's emotional reserves had been drained by prior children. In such families, the overall tensions as well as the individual problems intensified with each succeeding child. In other families, the marijuana-abusing youngster had long been seen as mirroring the parents' limitations, anxieties, and insecurities, while his or her sibling was regarded as having the parents' best characteristics. Each child tended to be treated accordingly.

In some families the parents' exaggerated and rigid expectations of a favored child, and their subsequent diasppointment in that child, resulted in a shift in their affections to another of the siblings. Among other families, parental difficulties caused problems for a particular child when he or she was quite young and even though the parents had resolved these difficulties the child's troubles persisted.

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Among some of the families, the marijuana-abusing adolescent had been cast in the role of the "difficult" child almost from the time of birth; in others such typing was made later. By whatever route, each of the youngsters who ended up as a marijuana abuser had been labelled within the family as "troublesome" or "bad," while the brother or sister was considered "good." Such a split between siblings did not result from the one youngster's marijuana abuse. Rather, it invariably preceded and was an essential contributor to this behavior. The nondrug-abusing siblings, in siding with their parents against the marijuana-abusing child, contributed to the abuser's sense of ostracism from the family; they also formed a negative identification with the "problem" child which served to protect them from becoming drug abusers.

THE FUNCTIONS OF MARIJUANA ABUSE FOR ADOLESCENTS

Marijuana was seen to have a variety of functions for adolescents: as a defiant or provocative act directed against parents, in particular, and, by extension, to other authority figures; as a self-destructive act; as a modifier of disturbing emotions such as anger; as a reenforcer of fantasies of effortless, grandiose success; and as a help in withdrawing from conflicts concerning competition and achievement.

Psychodynamic exploration made possible an understanding of the relationship of the internal feelings of the marijuana abusers to both their external behavior and its effects on their families. For example, Eddie, the young man who dreamed that while high he accidentally killed his mother and who fantasized shooting his entire family and then dying in a gun battle with the police, psychologically fulfilled both wishes with marijuana. Through his heavy smoking over the past several years, he destroyed the life of his family while destroying his own life as well. Eddie's dream and fantasy life made clear the function of marijuana as a link between his destructive and self-destructive behavior, and the origins of this behavior in his relationship with his family.

In all of its functions, marijuana served to detach these adolescents from the problems of the real world -- from their anger and unhappiness with their parents, and from the need to work and compete to achieve success. In so doing, it permitted some to appear casual or light-hearted while inside they felt miserable. Fantasies of being destined for a special fate, to become rich, and to excel at a sport they scarcely played were typical of the parody of success, achievement, and confidence marijuana sustained in some of the young men. The young female marijuana abusers, while not usually expecting particular greatness, nevertheless maintained a magical belief that good things would happen to them: college acceptance while flunking out of high school or happiness in love while dating unresponsive or abusive young men. For all these adolescents marijuana helped sustain, in an unrealistic way and with self-destructive effects, the desire for power, control, achievement, and emotional fullness.

Although marijuana abuse was found to span a spectrum of meanings for the individuals involved, all of its functions were related in the abusers' attempts to deal with longstanding feelings of being deprived of approval or acceptance within their families. The abusers' belief that nothing they could do would make them loved members of their families served to produce or intensify a retreat from competitive achievement, and to turn them toward means of passive consolation in which grandiose dreams of love or success could be sustained.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTURBANCE

The psychological test results independently offered support for many of the observations and conclusions which were derived from the psychodynamic interviews with the adolescent marijuana abusers. Particularly confirmed were conclusions regarding probable school and learning difficulties of the adolescents in spite of their adequate intellectual endowments, as well as difficulties with their families and friends arising from problems with impulse control and their feelings about themselves. Psychological reports on all the marijuana abusers stressed the integrative failures apparent in their personality make-up, as reflected particularly on the Rorschach test, which approximated those which have been posited for borderline personality organization. These test results were not surprising in view of the impulsivity, self-damaging behavior, affective instability, and underachievement in school and work revealed in the clinical interviews.

More surprisingly, however, the psychological tests in almost all cases showed equal and sometimes greater disturbance in the nondrug-abusing siblings. Although the siblings gave evidence that the disturbances in their families that had affected their marijuana-abusing siblings had also caused problems for them, they were significantly different from their brothers and sisters in their patterns of relatively high achievement, as well as in their lack of impulsiveness, self-destructiveness, and emotional lability. As a result, the nondrug abusers were better able to meet parental and societal standards.

The psychological tests consistently indicated that both the marijuana abusers and their nondrug-abusing siblings had comparable difficulty in dealing with unstructured situations. The interview material, however, suggested that the nondrug abusers knew how to avoid putting themselves in such situations; their avoidance of drugs was partly related to their desire to maintain control and structure in their lives. The ability to find, create, and operate in structured situations, whether at school or in personal relationships, was an important attribute these siblings had developed in their families and were able to use outside the family as well.

The psychological test results clearly indicated that marijuana abuse cannot be accounted for or explained simply as a manifestation of psychopathology or psychological disturbance. At

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the same time, the fact that each of the marijuana abusers showed such psychopathology confirmed past research findings that psychological variables are significantly correlated with heavy marijuana abuse in adolescents. An important contribution of this study is that it provided an understanding of the family context out of which was generated both the youngsters' psychological problems and their marijuana abuse. Relatedly, through the comparisons afforded between the marijuana-abusing adolescents and their nondrug-abusing siblings, the study provided considerable evidence that the youngsters' overt expression of their psychopathology -- whether in the form of destructive acting-out behavior, withdrawal, or rigid conformity to the standards of others -- could be accounted for only by the family psychodynamics which permitted, directed, and maintained the way the marijuana abusers and their siblings behaved.

OUTCOMES OF MARIJUANA ABUSE

The fact that family psychodynamics operate as such a clear determinant of adolescent marijuana abuse raises important issues not only in terms of understanding this behavior, but also for treating it and, perhaps most importantly, for preventing its occurrence. Although these issues are beyond the scope of this particular monograph, it should be noted that ongoing follow-up of the marijuana-abusing adolescents who participated in this study has indicated considerable variation in the outcomes for these youngsters as they have grown older. Of the six adolescents whose cases have been discussed in detail, one has almost entirely stopped using marijuana and another has significantly reduced his level of use during the two years since the research interviews with them were completed. A third youngster has maintained a fairly high level of use, but with improved behavior particularly at school, while the remaining three are smoking as much or more as they did before. These figures closely represent those found among the total sample of 17 adolescents studied.

Bobby G is an example of the first group of youngsters. After years of problems with school work, Bobby was finally diagnosed as having a longstanding learning disorder and placement in a nonconventional educational environment was recommended. This information appeared to bring considerable relief to his parents of the guilt they had long felt over Bobby's repeated failures, and enabled them to view their son's behavior as something other than merely defiance or rebellion against them. They enrolled Bobby in a special school for youngsters with learning problems, where he was able to perform adequately. His behavior within the family improved considerably and his marijuana smoking dropped dramatically. Following his graduation he enlisted in the service and when he was last seen, he reported that he was happy and smoking marijuana only very infrequently. Bobby's case demonstrates that even for so-called "burn-outs," marijuana abuse is not inevitably a one-way street.

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Clara D. was also able to greatly reduce her marijuana smoking when her parents accepted that she could not meet their academic expectations or keep up with the pace her sister Vanessa had set in school. Clara also enrolled in an alternative school with a heavy emphasis on practical experience rather than formal academics, and, as was the case with Bobby, this resulted in a significant improvement in her feelings about herself.

These two cases as well as several others in the study demonstrate the relationship of marijuana to the youngsters' conflict over performance and achievement. Both Clara and Bobby experienced in their new school environments the relaxation they had previously sought through marijuana, which reduced their need for the drug. Even more critical in these cases, however, was the parents' response to their youngsters' changing adaptation. Both the B's and the D's were able to accept their children with the reduced expectations that accompanied their transfer to the nontraditional school, and as a result, both youngsters showed significant improvement in their family relationships.

Tim H, a youngster who has maintained his high level of marijuana use over the past several years, provides an interesting contrast to the cases of Bobby and Clara. Tim also transferred to a nontraditional school following his failure to complete his senior year at his public school. Although he managed to graduate from this school, and is currently planning to enroll in a local state college, his family relationships have not shown similar improvement and his marijuana smoking has remained high. The essential difference in this case is the fact that Tim's parents have not altered their expectations of him and continue to make him aware of their disappointment in his inability to perform at the level of their expectations.

This pattern was seen in an even more dramatic form with Dave M and Eddie J, both of whom continue to be regarded by their families as failures. At the age of 21, Dave, one of the brightest youngsters seen, is driving a cab irregularly, living on and off with several different friends, finding little satisfaction in personal and social relations, and centering his life around obtaining and smoking marijuana. Although he maintains sporadic contact with his parents, their interaction has not changed and Dave's current life seems merely to reenforce their view that he will never amount to anything.

Eddie, at the age of 17, has returned to live with his family, having completed his 18-month period in the residential treatment center he was sent to because of his difficulties at home and in school. Although fear of being sent away again has curbed Eddie somewhat in his behavior toward his parents, his academic and disciplinary problems at school continue unabated as does his abuse of both marijuana and alcohol.

Finally, Angela A also seems to have become fixed in a seriously self-destructive pattern involving a high level of marijuana and alcohol abuse. Now 17 years old, she is still functioning at school and in her part-time job, but she despairs of achieving in any other way the sense of stability she had in her family when she was young, and her longterm prognosis does not seem good.

One encouraging finding which emerged somewhat serendipitously from the research was the fact that many of these youngsters and their families responded quite well to the therapeutic interventions accompanying their participation in the study. It seems unlikely that, without such intervention, either Bobby's or Clara's parents would have been able to accept their child's academic transitions, or that Tim would have successfully completed high school. This is not to say that all the youngsters or their families were amenable to treatment; in Dave's, Eddie's and Angela's cases, they were not. It does indicate, however, that effective treatment strategies can be developed based on a comprehensive understanding of the overall family dynamics.

These relatively positive outcomes notwithstanding, both the clinical interview material and the psychological test results obtained in this study unequivocally indicate the seriousness of marijuana abuse among adolescents. Although the findings of this research cannot be extrapolated to casual, occasional users of marijuana, those adolescents who use the drug at the level of the 17 youngsters seen clearly constitute a subgroup worthy of societal concern.

In its most severe and unabating form, marijuana abuse continues, with devastating intrapsychic and interpersonal effects, for young people like Dave and Eddie. Even for those who are no longer marijuana abusers and are now functioning relatively well, marijuana abuse was part of their effort to scale down their aspirations markedly. Many of the adolescents seen in this study were once excellent students who began heavy use of marijuana as a means of withdrawing from the demands and pressures of school. In every case where this was seen, school pressures were intolerably linked with parental demands and expectations which these youngsters' family experiences made them feel determined and entitled not to meet. Such youngsters often appear to be steadfastly holding onto their right not to succeed and pursuing this pseudo-goal in their behavior toward school and work, as well as in their relationships. Whether they will continue to function at a level significantly below their potential as they move into adulthood is an issue we are addressing in a current study of adult marijuana abusers, which includes continuing follow-up of the adolescent sample studied in this project.

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